

"The manager can function in the right way only if he works regularly as a loader in the mine. Otherwise he's working in a paper mine, not in an iron mine."

Albania is in danger of becoming a concept without reality, a cliché in the Soviet-Chinese conflict. In this book, Myrdal and Kessle undertake to fill the void, to describe the country and its history. The reader will benefit from the undisguised and contagious passion which the authors developed for their subject, after approaching it, on their first visit, with, as they themselves say, ignorance and prejudice.

They are fascinated by the history of Albania, and they make it fascinating to read. There is here a synopsis of two thousand years of that history, illuminated (particularly in the medieval and early modern periods) by comparisons with other nations whose history is more familiar. They give a remarkable sketch of Skanderbeg's revolt against Turkish hegemony, portray the Albanians' persistent sense of themselves as a people, and suggest, finally, that the chronicle of defeat and rebellion over two millenia is the appropriate background for understanding the variety of

Marxism that the Albanians have embraced with such determination in the modern era. We come to see the Albanians not merely as figures in a power conflict, but as a people suppressed, under one master or another, since forever, and forever unreconciled to that suppression. It is in this past, too, that the authors find the roots of the equalitarianism they found so striking in modern Albanian life and society.

Jan Myrdal and Gun Kessle have previously published, among other books, *Report from a Chinese Village* and *Angkor: An Essay on Art and Imperialism*.

129349

DR
701
SS
K4.313

ALBANIA DEFIANT

BY JAN MYRDAL AND GUN KESSLE

TRANSLATED FROM THE SWEDISH
BY PAUL BRITTEN AUSTIN



MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

WITHDRAWN
Goshen College
Good Library

MAY 21 2009

Periodicals

Auth. _____

GOSHEN COLLEGE LIBRARY
GOSHEN, INDIANA 46526

Copyright © 1976 by Monthly Review Press
All Rights Reserved

Originally published in Sweden by AB PA Norstedt & Soners Forlag,
Stockholm. Copyright © 1970 by Gun Kessle and Jan Myrdal.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Myrdal, Jan.

Albania defiant.

Updated translation of Albansk utmaning by G. Kessle and J.
Myrdal.

1. Albania—History. I. Kessle, Gun. Albansk utmaning. II. Title.
DR701.S5K4313 949.65 74-21469
ISBN 0-85345-356-X

First Printing

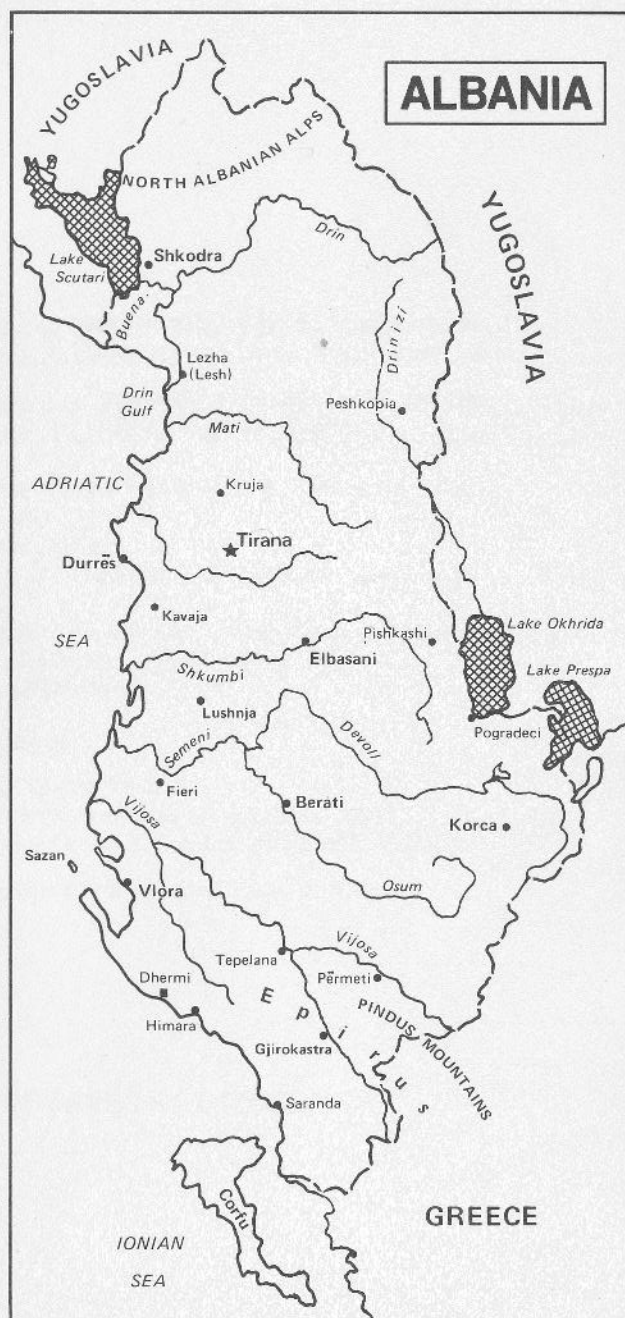
Monthly Review Press
62 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011
21 Theobald's Road, London WC1X 8SL, England

Manufactured in the United States of America

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GUN KESSLE

*Land of Albania! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!*

—Byron, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"
(Canto II, Stanza XXXVIII)



Albania . . . Shqipëria 11

Albanian challenge 13

Speaking of Epidamnus 19

On the importance of the past 22

About Illyrian 26

On founding a realm 34

The double destitution 53

The powers' interests
and the nation's rebirth 61

Albania's independence and proletarian
internationalism, or Branting and the
Albanian tribes 66

But which independence? 88

About higher values 94

Which class could lead? 99

Around the green table 103

But what did the people say? 105

Concerning oil, land,
and the rights of the people 111

A certain King Zog 116

On getting to know one's friends 119

Not just a king	129
The possibility of the necessary	131
Who founded Albania's Communist Party	136
Patriots, occupants, and "patriots"	144
Why was Xoxe condemned to death?	152
The lessons of history	167
Problems and developments	171
Conclusions	176
Summing up (Tirana, December 1974)	178

"By *Albania* is usually meant that country which lies to the south of Bosnia along the Adriatic and Ionian seas facing southern Italy, comprising among other things the old country of *Epirus*, which extends to the frontier of the kingdom of Greece. In this part of Albania is *Janina*, the residence of Ali Pascha, famous from the Greek War of Independence. The whole of *Albania* can be estimated at 1,661 square miles with 1 to 2 million inhabitants." (W. E. Svedelius, *Notes for Academic Exams in Political Science*, Uppsala, 1869.)

"*Albania*, a principality founded in 1913 by decision of the great powers, as yet unorganized. Area and population unknown, capital at present, *Valona*." (*Almanack för Alla*, 1914.)

"*Albania*
(About 1 mil. inhab.)

Size, position, and population. For the most part Albania is a wild and inaccessible mountainous country about the same size as [the Swedish province of] Dalarna and situated in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula. Frontiers: see map.

The population consists of *Albanians*, who are descended from the prehistoric inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula and mostly embrace the *Muhammedan faith*. They are a brave but cruel people, little disposed to work and somewhat untouched by the rest of European culture. Blood feuds, for example, are common. The economy is little developed, and agriculture hardly meets its own needs. The main source of income is *sheep and cattle farming*, particularly sheep breeding.

For a short while Albania was an independent kingdom, but is now united with Italy. The government has its seat in the little town of *Tirana*." (Carlson-Rönholm-Moberg *School Geography*, First Course, Stockholm, 1942.)

"*Albania*, people's democratic republic in the Balkan Peninsula, 27.5 sq. kil., 1.7 mil. inhab.; capital, *Tirana*." (*Prisma Encyclopaedia*, 1966.)

In *Social Sciences for Grammar Schools*, Part 2, by Garland Helmfrid Holmberg Jansson Linnarsson, Albania is only found on page 255 in a map of Europe showing the Comecon countries. In this map the USSR and eastern Europe are marked in; the rest is left white—with one exception: opposite Italy there is a little country, shaded in, on the west coast of the Balkan Peninsula. The text runs: "Earlier a member." The book was printed in 1969.

ALBANIA . . . SHQIPERIA

A country on the west side of the Balkan peninsula. The most mountainous of all the Balkan lands. Only one-third of it lies at an altitude less than 1,000 feet above sea level. Two-thirds of its surface are between 1,000 and 8,800 feet above the sea. The average is 2,342 feet. Along the coasts the climate is Mediterranean; the inland definitely continental. Albania has the highest summer temperature anywhere in the Balkans. Its annual rainfall is more than 40 inches.

ALBANIANS . . . SHQIPTARÉ . . . SHKIPETARS . . . SKIPTARS . . . ARNAUTS.

A people who regard themselves as the descendants of the Illyrian tribes. Altogether there are some 3 million Albanians. A little more than half of them live within the country's frontiers. The rest live mostly in Yugoslavia, Greece, and southern Italy.

Since 1878, large sections of the Albanian-speaking population of the Balkans have been cut off from Albania itself. During the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 both Albania and Macedonia were to have been carved up between the other Balkan states. Macedonia was, but Albania (after some territorial sacrifices) became an independent nation.

The Albanian language comprises two main groups. Between the northern Ghegs and the southern Tosks the Shkumbi River constitutes the approximate dividing line. Yet Albanian itself is quite sharply distinguishable from the other languages surrounding it, and the differences in dialect as between Ghegs and Tosks are not enough to prevent Albanian from being regarded by both as a single, unified, national language.

Albanian (Shqip) is an independent Indo-European tongue. Its origins are still a matter of discussion among experts. It is so highly characteristic that it was long regarded as not being an Indo-European language at all; but today this is considered a proven fact. As yet its connection with Illyrian and Thracian has not been studied. Many linguists, however, think that Albanian developed out of the old Illyrian tongue, and linguistic policy in Albania today aims at restoring its Illyrian character. Nowadays Albanian children, in line with this, are given Illyrian names.

Albanian contains many borrowed words from Latin, Greek, Italian, Romanian, Serbian, and Turkish. The earliest extant Albanian text dates from 1462; the first dictionary (Albanian-German) from 1492. Since the Congress of Monastir in 1908, the Latin alphabet has been used, and since 1945 the Tosk dialect (after certain linguistic modifications) has been used for the written language, in schools and for official purposes.

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA . . . REPUB-
LIKA POPULLORE E SHQIPËRISË . . . R P SH.

The land area of the People's Republic of Albania amounts to 11,113 square miles. North to south it measures a maximum of 205 miles, and east to west 87 miles. The land frontier runs for 360 miles: to north and east facing Yugoslavia, in the southeast and south facing Greece. The Adriatic coast to the north and the Ionian coast to the south, together stretch for about 250 miles.

The population in 1938 was 1,040,353, of whom 15.4 percent were living in towns. In 1968, the population was 2,011,000, about 35 percent in towns. In 1938, Tirana, the capital, had a population of 25,079; today it has about 180,000. It is a youthful population. During the school year 1967-1968, 498,997 pupils were educated at various levels.

Albania's natural resources are great: oil, asphalt, coal, chromium, copper, iron, etc. In 1938, Albania was a poor semi-colonial agrarian country. Its raw materials were under the control of foreign interests and its agricultural produce was not enough to support its own population. Today it is a developed agrarian country, swiftly being industrialized.

ALBANIAN CHALLENGE

At Dhermi we bathe. We've come from Vlora and have passed through the mountains. The Ionian Sea is as blue as can be, its waters are clear, its beaches lovely. We'd have nothing against staying on here.

"Impossible. It's forbidden."

"But the season hasn't started yet. There's plenty of room."

"Comrades, it's forbidden."

"Lots of things are forbidden here in Albania."

"Not at all. Dhermi is the trade unions' bathing resort. Only trade union members are allowed to come here. Because this is the best beach in Albania. No foreigners and no bureaucrats."

"Make an exception. There's plenty of room, isn't there?"

"If we make an exception for one, we'll have to make an exception for two. If we make an exception for two, then we'll have to make an exception for four. If we make an exception for eight, we'll have to make an exception for sixteen, and then thirty-two, sixty-four, a hundred and twenty-eight, two hundred and fifty-six, five hundred and twelve, one thousand and twenty-four, two thousand and forty-eight, four thousand and ninety-six, eight thousand one hundred and ninety-two, sixteen thousand three hundred and eighty-four, thirty-two thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight, sixty-five thousand . . ."

"But I was only asking whether we could stay here for the night."

"Sixty-five thousand five hundred and thirty-six, one hundred and thirty-one thousand and seventy-two. No, you can't

stay the night here. We've made a decision of principle. It applies to everyone. Only trade union members who are in production, right in production, can live here. We make no exceptions for anyone. A member of the central committee tried to stop the night here, but we didn't make an exception. Tourists and bureaucrats can bathe at Durres or Saranda. Dhermi is for the workers."

"Oh come—surely there's some point in between no exceptions at all and one hundred and thirty-one thousand and seventy-two exceptions!"

"There are no points in between. Look at the revisionist countries. Look at their bathing resorts. We've learned from the way things have turned out there. They're not going to turn out that way here. You begin with one exception, and in the end there are only exceptions and no workers."

The Ionian Sea was very blue and we drank the good wine from Himara. Here at Dhermi the Czechoslovaks had once asked to be allowed to built tourist hotels.

"They said they'd bring their own building materials from Czechoslovakia. They'd have cleaning women and waiters from Czechoslovakia. They'd serve their own dumplings and their own beer and they'd lie in our sun and bathe in our sea. But then our government said: Albania's not a colony. If you want to take a holiday here in our country, then take a holiday here. But if you want to set up a Czechoslovak enclave by the sea, you'll have to go to other countries for it."

"Khrushchev came here and had a look. 'Don't spoil the landscape with industries,' he said. 'Let's have a socialist division of labor. We'll industrialize ourselves, and you can grow lemons. Then we'll come here to you and swim.' But then our government said, 'Comrade Khrushchev, we've no intention of becoming a spa for Soviet functionaries. We've in mind to follow Comrade Stalin's advice and industrialize our country.'

"The CIA dropped some of its agents here. Flew them in from Italy and dropped them by parachute. But we got them. They had some fine radio equipment. They were going to set up a base here in Albania. At that time my brother was in the

security police. He had a word with the comrades in the Central Committee and said he thought we ought to be able to have some fun out of the CIA too. Everyone agreed. After all, we'd gotten their radios and their codes and all the rest of it. So we informed the CIA in Rome that the revolt was going fine. All we needed was more weapons. And the CIA flew in bazookas and gelignite and all kinds of weapons. And the more they sent, the more successes we reported back. We let the CIA fly in one consignment of weapons after another, and as soon as they came flying in, we snapped them up. They were good weapons. And cheap, too. But in the end even the CIA noticed something was amiss. They'd flown in masses of weapons and still nothing was happening in Albania. Then we told them how we'd been putting them on. Transmitted it in their own code. And then we tapped out: Ha-ha-ha."

The People's Republic of Albania is a challenge. A challenge to Washington, but also to Moscow. A challenge to Rome, but also to Belgrade. The generals in Athens and the Kremlin and the Pentagon, the official communist leaders in Paris, the Vatican's Press Service, and Hitler's former *Sonderbeauftragte des Auswärtigen Amtes für den Süd-Osten*, Herman Neubacher, all unanimously agree in the most heartfelt manner in condemning the People's Republic of Albania.

The Albanian challenge does not reside in Albania being a world power that threatens its neighbors with war. Albania is a little country. It's smaller than Wales. It is no bigger than one and a half times the Lake of Ladoga. It is the second smallest country in Europe. Only Luxemburg is smaller. (Andorra, Monaco, and San Marino, of course, are not really independent states.) Its population is small. Only Iceland and Luxemburg have fewer inhabitants.

The challenge does not consist in Albania's having conquered and occupied any foreign country, driven out or oppressed its original population. The Albanians' struggle for national independence has been long and tough. When, nearly sixty years ago, the great powers of the day reluctantly recognized Albania's existence, they still contrived to draw up its

frontiers in such a way that half the Albanian people were left outside them.

No, it is the very existence of this country that's a challenge. At regular intervals the powers have reached secret agreements for the partition of Albania. These negotiation consultations are still going on today. When Khrushchev was flirting with Athens, he repeated Czarist Russia's offer of November 22, 1914, that Greece should get the "southern part of Albania." The challenge is that Albania has continued to exist.

In Rome airport a traveler from Tirana is carefully registered by the security police. NATO is holding maneuvers along the Albanian frontiers. The navies of the superpowers cruise off the Albanian coasts and Soviet militarists threaten to declare war on Albania. Why? Because this little country refuses to subordinate itself to its great neighbors and mighty superpowers. It insists on preserving its national independence, irrespective of what is being decided in and between the Pentagon and the Kremlin.

When Czechoslovakia was occupied, Albania pointed out that this was the outcome of the shameful pact between the United States and the leaders of the Soviet Union. And Tirana said aloud what everywhere else was only being whispered: if the Spanish people rose against fascism, the United States would intervene and suppress the people, whereupon the Soviet Union would condemn the United States with words while supporting it with actions—just as the United States had condemned the Soviet Union in words but supported it with actions when the issue was the Soviet Union's attack on Czechoslovakia. Tirana warned the Pentagon and the Kremlin, and told them that Albania was not just a juicy fig for some superpower to chew up. Any attack on Albania would be countered with a people's war that recognized no frontiers and that would inescapably lead to a world war.

Responsible statesmen both in the United States and in the Soviet Union regard this as indecent, as warmongering. All they want, after all, is a peaceful coexistence. In Czechoslovakia as in Spain.

This Albanian lack of decency is not limited to declarations by Albania's government that it is ready to defend itself against the Pentagon, the Kremlin, and the smaller powers. In the United Nations, too, Albania has shown how utterly lacking in decency it is. At the Nineteenth General Assembly the Albanian delegate Halim Budo raised a question of order. He suggested that the statutes be respected.

If Albania is in a position to follow this policy, it is not thanks to having any powerful military machine. The entire Albanian people are armed, but the navy, the air force, and armored units are—naturally enough—not particularly strong. In May 1961 the Soviet leaders tried to undermine Albania's defenses by giving their officers orders to steal Albania's eight submarines. Naturally, this theft irritated the Albanians. But it hardly undermined Albania's defenses, which are based on the ability of its totally armed population to defend its mountains.

Nor is it by virtue of any wealth, in the economic sense, that Albania is able to follow a line of its own. It is not as if Albania were a powerful commercial republic—a Venice, or a Hanseatic city—not like sixteen hundred years ago when Durres was one of the Mediterranean's powerful commercial cities. In the years between the two world wars Albania was Europe's poorest country. It was virtually an Italian colony. It didn't even have as many as thirty technicians with a technical college education. Its national library contained only twelve thousand volumes. The people lived in utter poverty. But the revolution has lifted the country out of this poverty.

Both Washington and Moscow have tried, by trade boycotts and blockades, to starve Albania into compliance and a suitable humility. This hasn't worked. Albania is not wealthy. It still bears the stamp of the poverty of its own past. But in all the villages along the Greek frontier electric lights shine in schools, light industrial plants, and dwellings, while the villages on the other side of the frontier lie in a dimness of paraffin lamplight. Albania is developing.

Yet the Albanian challenge is much more than this. It is not just that the people have achieved and retained their

national independence and are developing their own economy. This little and poor mountain country that is being transformed into an industrial one is carrying this out with goals and methods the decision-makers, whether in Stockholm or Bonn, in Belgrade or Washington, in Moscow or Delhi, have declared to be utopian. What the World Bank and EEC and Comecon declare to be impossible is being achieved in Albania. The whole country is developing. The Albanians are not allowing their "poor" districts to become underprivileged, like Sicily or northern Sweden. Their country is being industrialized at the same time as their bureaucracy is being put in its place and the administrative apparatus is being reduced. (Between 1966 and 1969 the number of persons employed at various levels in administrative bodies fell by 17 percent and the cost of administrative work by 79 million new lek; *at the same time*, production rose and there was a sharp increase in the number of college graduates.) The Albania which used to be a god-forgotten agrarian country that couldn't even support its own population, a country that exported oranges and imported marmalade, whose oil wells were owned by foreigners and whose school system, too, was controlled by foreigners, is today self-supporting in food-stuffs and exports industrial products. Instead of increasing its tobacco plantations, selling tobacco and importing grain to sow, investment in tobacco is being reduced, the cultivation of cereals raised, and copper wire exported.

This policy is being carried out under the most difficult conditions imaginable. Albania is small and poor. All around it are powerful enemies. China, an ally, lies on the other side of the globe. Yet here on the west coast of the Balkan peninsula, Albania constitutes a challenge to the entire world order. This state does not accept the world being partitioned among the superpowers. Nor does it accept the way things are going, a way that, according to the rulers of the capitalist countries, of the countries of eastern Europe, and of Sweden's so-called mixed economy, is inevitable.

It is this challenge to the prevailing world order that is important. Not the question of how Albania views beards and mini-skirts.

SPEAKING OF EPIDAMNOS

We'd come from Shkodra and were on our way to Fieri and had spent the night at the Hodel Adriatik at Durres. It was September 18 and the tourist season was just coming to an end. In the evening we stood on the terrace outside our room. Smoked, listened to the sea.

"It was here the city of Epidamnos was founded twenty-five hundred years ago," Gun said. "A fertile hinterland and a safe harbor."

In the middle of the night we were awakened by noises from Skåne, the southernmost province of our own country—Sweden. Three Malmö businessmen had just turned up. Now they were sitting on the terrace outside our window. Drinking wine and chatting. Not until about three in the morning did they shut up. We lay in the dark. A smell of the sea was in the room. Gun said: "And it was in this remote colony that the Peloponnesian War actually started. I've been reading about it in Frasheri's history of Albania. The aristocracy were driven out by the people. But both the aristocrats and the commoners were slaveowners, and the great war became a war for the control of markets and power over the slaves."

The Romans preferred to call the town by its other name—Dyrrachium. Which wasn't so odd, either; Epidamnium sounded too much like "damnum," meaning damage, loss, defeat. But as it turned out, Epidamnos' history *was* only a long history of defeats. Nor did the struggle for Durres end with the Peloponnesian War.

It was here at Durres that Pompey defeated Caesar for the last time, before marching to his own great defeat at Pharsalus. Here, in 481, Theodoric—known as the Great—arrived

with his Ostrogoths. Here the Bulgars arrived. And the Normans—Robert Guiscard allowed Durres to be pillaged in 1082. Crusaders and adventurers of every kind. The Venetians took Durres and lost Durres and took it back. Charles of Anjou—younger brother of Saint Louis—was besieging Durres when he proclaimed the Kingdom of Arbëria. Serbs and Venetians fought over Durres and the Turks took the city in 1501.

That Durres was a constant bone of contention was no coincidence. It stood in the path of all the conquerors. It was from its fine harbor that Illyrian slaves, olive oil, wheat, and oil were shipped. The cargoes varied with the epoch, but Durres was always an important trading center on the Adriatic.

From Durres, the great military and commercial route went via Elbasani to Salonika, binding together the two halves of the Roman Empire: the Via Egnatia. From Durres, the Adriatic coast road went northward and southward via Butrint down to Athens.

When the twentieth century began, Durres was a remote provincial town of five thousand inhabitants, with a silted up harbor and a decayed fortress—the main town of the *sandjak* of Durres in the village of Janina in Albania in Turkey.

In this little town the Roman Catholic archbishop and the Greek Orthodox metropolitan kept a jealous eye on each other, and the representatives of Austria-Hungary and Italy spied on each other. For Russia and Austria had signed a treaty of friendship for the preservation of peace in the Balkan peninsula, and the balance was not to be disturbed; and the eastern part of the Balkans was to be a Russian sphere of interest and the western part, Austrian. And France and Russia had agreed that Austria should be prevented from getting as far as Salonika and that Serbia should therefore get Durres. And Italy and Austria were allies and recognized that Albania ought to be independent. And Italy and Russia had agreed to keep Austria out of Albania. And Russia and Britain were discussing the harbors along the Adriatic. And in 1900 Austrian trade with Albania was four times as big as the

Italian trade; but by 1907 Italy's trade with Albania had risen until it exceeded Austria's by a million francs.

Durres was always a place of interest, from the Peloponnesian War up to the Balkan War and the two world wars, and on Good Friday, April 7, 1939, Italian troops took Durres after a brief struggle.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PAST

In 1962 a new palace of culture was to be built in Durres. They began to build it on the main square. They pulled down the old shacks, left over from Turkish times. They were dilapidated and culturally and historically worthless. But after they had begun digging out the foundations and got down to a depth of two meters, the workmen found a mosaic floor. So the work was broken off and an archeologist was summoned from the museum. It was a beautiful floor.

With the archeologist's aid the excavation went on. But now very cautiously. Soon it was discovered that instead of excavating for the foundations of a cultural palace, they were digging up a large bathing establishment from Roman times. It was unusually well preserved. The whole water supply system was intact.

The people's council of Durres discussed the matter. Durres needed its cultural palace. Durres needed somewhere people could meet. It needed lecture halls and study rooms. Furthermore, this was the logical site for such a building: in the middle of town. But it was also necessary to preserve the ancient baths. To destroy them would be wrong.

The Durres people's council turned to the government, and the government sent a delegation to Durres to study the site. Having inspected it and discussed the matter with the archeologists and listened to what the people's council had to say, the government delegation, too, found that the baths should be preserved and the cultural palace built.

Architects were commissioned to provide a technical solution to this problem and a planning committee was formed to find the necessary resources. The problem was solved, but it

proved costly. The cultural palace stands on pillars, and underneath it the excavation is still going on. From the grand foyer of the cultural palace one goes up to the first story. There tobacco workers are studying. They are working in two shifts and undergoing adult education in their spare time. You can also go down through the cellar. That brings you to the Roman baths. Where the excavation is still going on.

It's a good solution. But the past cannot always be fitted so clearly into the present. The Durres amphitheater, too, is being excavated. It lies in the middle of the town. Once it had seats for sixty thousand spectators. Then it was filled in and gradually built upon. Once it had been twenty-six yards long. Now a shaft has been dug to a depth of eighty-four feet. The seating was found to be well preserved. But the walls of the shaft were singularly friable. On closer examination it was found that these earth walls crumbled so easily because they consisted of human bones. The amphitheater had been filled up, but in a grand and glorious way. It had been a mass grave. Now the glory of the great men—Theodoric and all the rest—was as obvious and tangible as could be. It grinned whitely from the walls of the shaft.

Afterwards, in the seventh century, the galleries of the amphitheater had been turned into catacombs, and the mosaics were very beautiful. But any one who emerged from the catacombs and the tombs with their mosaics saw thousands of nameless dead in the earthen wall. All had been slaughtered and used as fill.

It's the same in Albania as in Greece and Italy and Egypt. Anyone looking for great and glorious monuments does not have far to look. When Caesar was murdered, Augustus was at Apollonia, outside present-day Fieri. He was being educated. Emperors of Rome and Constantinople came from Albania. Likewise grand viziers, generals at whose names folk trembled, and rulers of Egypt.

Here were great cities, good harbors, and important trade routes. And when Mussolini wanted to justify his invasion of Albania, he justified it with the Roman Empire. The baths and the amphitheater were both worth preserving. But they

do not tell us much about the common people. The greatness of the great is admitted. Theodoric became known as Theodoric the Great, and the common people of Durres were used as fill. Even so, these people are not quite nameless.

On the mountain slopes above Durres, terraces are being dug for vineyards and olive trees. It is there one finds their gravestones. Simple, crudely cut stones with inscriptions such as:

D.M.S.
SECVNDINVSSV.R
AECONSERVAEQ.A.
XXVIII.MENS.V.M.
ECVM.ANNOS.XII.
MENSES.VII.DIES
.V.BENEMEREN
TIPOSVIT

The letters are irregular, and show no sure hand in the man who carved them. A memorial to a twenty-eight-year-old Illyrian woman, Sura. She had lived for twelve years with Secundinus, who put up this stone for her. Sura and Secundinus were slaves at Durres sometime during the second century A.D. Sura died young and was buried on the slopes above the town.

All through the centuries it was these people, never famous, never celebrated in writing, who built the city; who built its amphitheater and its baths, who worked in its docks and its storehouses, and who were its common people. The great and the glorious have gone down in history as conquerors. People like Sura and Secundinus were used as fill. And in the foreign office and on the general staffs, plans were drawn up, and it was opined that Durres could go to this country or that country, and be used like this or conquered like that.

What has really happened at Durres and in Albania generally is that people like Sura and Secundinus have seized power in their own city and over their own land. No longer are they merely its population. Durres is no longer a place diplomats can argue and quarrel about and general staffs fight

over. And when their descendants seized power in Durres, they too were not merely poor. They were illiterates and ignoramuses. Now they are sitting in its palace of culture and studying in their spare time. After three thousand years of revolts and class warfare, it is Sura and Secundinus who are in power. And they will never voluntarily let go of it, or let those who build their city and work in its storehouses be used as fill when some great leader appears on the stage of history.

ABOUT ILLYRIAN

"Someone proposes a toast to our future family. Katrina lowers her eyes. They wish us many children. A whole brigade of Heroes of Socialist Work, they wish us, and all with Illyrian names! Illyrian names are popular now." (Ismal Kadare, *The Wedding*.)

"I thought of the Illyrian tribes. What has not this race given to the world!

"It has given the world warriors, artists, regents, popes, emperors." (Nonda Bulka, *Dreams at Rosafa*)

Yes, Illyrian names are popular just now in Albania, and Illyrian, too, is being talked about a great deal. Naturally this is problematic, on several levels.

MacPherson was writing *Ossian's Songs*, Goethe had Werther exclaim: "What world does not the splendid one lead me into! To wander on the heath in a storm, in fogs and mists, with our ancestors' ghosts glimpsed in the moonlight!"

Afterward it turned out that MacPherson's Gaelic folk poems were neither Gaelic nor folk poems, and when Prosper Mérimée—under the pen name Hyacinth Maglanovich—published his collection of Illyrian folk songs, Goethe was suspicious and declared that Mérimée had written them himself, albeit in a meritorious manner. But many others were deceived and one serious German researcher is said to have translated Mérimée's French text into German and reproduced the "original meter" of the folk songs, something which Mérimée, he said, had neglected.

And yet, Gaelic was a reality, even if MacPherson was a charlatan. (From which it does not follow that *Ossian's Songs*

are bad poetry.) The struggle of the Irish for their national independence was to be long and sanguinary. Nor is Illyrian somebody's invention just because Prosper Mérimée amused himself with an ironical mystification in 1827.

Nor was the Illyrian that Prosper Mérimée attached himself to the same Illyrian the Albanians are linking up with today. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Illyrian came to play a double and shifting role in the formation of nations in Southeast Europe. When Prosper Mérimée wrote "La Guzla," it was not just an ironical mystification. He himself was being exposed to one of history's ironies. The future state archivist made his slaves Illyrians.

The older Greek authors did not usually write about "Illyria"; they wrote about "the Illyrians." These Illyrians lived in the region to the east of the Adriatic. They founded cities and formed states during the fifth century B.C. They participated in the struggles for the Greek colonies along the coast. They warred with the Macedonians and were crushed by Philip of Macedonia.

Basing themselves on their excellent harbors (Marx once pointed out that the good harbors were on the east side of the Adriatic, and it was this that determined Roman, Venetian, and Austrian policies there), they fought with Rome for the control of trade in the Adriatic. Finally they were conquered by Rome.

These Illyrian tribes spoke Illyrian. And it is with this Illyria that Albania is linking itself today. Sura, the young woman who was buried on the heights above Durrës, was an Illyrian.

Roman Illyria was a political concept. Its frontiers shifted over the centuries. (Both Vienna and Athens have been situated in this Illyria.) Roman Illyria was not an ethnic concept.

In the seventh century the region was conquered by the Slavonic tribes. The Illyrian population was either driven out or enslaved. Only the Albanian tribes managed to retain their ethnic identity. And that brought Illyria, the political concept, to an end.

From then on, Illyria was a concept in literature and folk

tales. Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* takes place there. Not until the Peace of Schönbrunn, on October 14, 1809, did Illyria again come into being. Under that treaty, Austria lost its provinces of Craniola, Carinthia, Istria, and Croatia to the west of the Sava, as well as Dalmatia, and Napoleon set up the Illyrian Provinces. After his fall, the region was returned to Austria. But Dalmatia was separated out and formed an Austrian crown land under the name of the Kingdom of Dalmatia, and the northern provinces formed the Austrian crown land of the Kingdom of Illyria. Illyria had been moved far to the north on the Adriatic; it had become an Austrian inland area, north of the lands of the ancient Illyrians.

The formation of nation-states took a different course in Southeast Europe from that in Northwest Europe. Austria and Turkey, feudal states lacking any developed capitalism, controlled these regions. For that is what they were: regions, not nations.

That is why, during its "national renaissance" of the 1840s, the south Slav bourgeoisie tried to develop a common language for Slovenes, Serbs, and Croats, all in the name of Illyria.

Words are magical, and historical necessity is ironical. In Greece it was the Bavarian count, Josef Ludwig von Armansperg, who was Otto of Greece's chancellor of state. Though he dressed up the Greek soldiers in Bavarian uniforms, he moved the capital of Bavarian Greece to Athens. By ordering almost all of Byzantine and Turkish Athens demolished, he made it possible for the Greek bourgeoisie to attach themselves to the Acropolis and thus create the Greek tradition they needed.

The South Slav efforts first appeared under the guise of the "Illyrian movement." What later was to find explicitly South Slavonic (Yugoslav) and Pan-Slavic expression was done in the name of the Illyrians who, many centuries earlier, had been driven out by the Slavs. Prosper Mérimée's irony was much more double-edged than he realized; nor was it wholly a coincidence that Pushkin, awakened to Russian

nationalism, believed in the authenticity of Mérimée's Illyrian folk songs.

But between these South Slav and Greek peoples, aroused to national self-consciousness, the non-Slavonic and non-Greek Albanian tribes lived in a peripheral Turkish province whose poverty was as profound as the generally accepted ferocity of its people.

The Albanians were divided into two main language groups: Ghegs and Tosks. And these were, in turn, divided into tribes and clans, all struggling among themselves. The Albanians were also divided between three internecine religions: Islam, Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox. In the mountains the Albanian tribes were virtually independent. In the cities the Turks ruled. But common to all Albanians was their feeling of not being Slavs, nor Greeks, nor Turks. All felt their language was a common language of their own, their history common history. Skanderbeg was a hero to them all. And if anyone wanted to talk about Illyrians, then the Albanians alone had a right—up to a point—to regard themselves as their descendants.

Only at a late date did Albania come to be a nation. For a long while it seemed as if the Albanians were going to be one of Europe's deleted peoples. The Welsh or Basques or Lapps of the Balkans.

The only way the Albanian nation could achieve independence was through a series of popular, anti-imperialist revolts, leading to a war of national liberation that at the same time implied a social revolution. In Albania socialism and nationalism coincide, and therefore place quite special demands on research into the history of the Albanian people. But the historical situation in which the Albanians are building socialism is also highly special.

Tito's Yugoslavia has turned out to be a successor to Serbian chauvinism. In Albania, Titoism is a highly concrete threat to national independence. The hostility of the Western powers is as marked as ever. The British navy has turned into the United States navy. The leaders of the Soviet Union have

become revisionists, and old Pan-Slavic Czarist Russia has come creeping out of the proletarian state's overcoat. The Albanians are a very small people. They are building socialism in geographical isolation.

This is why the question of the Albanian state is not *just* a question of a state. As a feudal state, Albania came into being toward the end of the twelfth century. During the fifteenth century, Skanderbeg's long war against the Turks had turned into a national war, and the Turks' victory also meant the destruction of the embryonic state of Albania. For five hundred years the country had been devastated, had borne the stamp of economic and social destitution, but the national movement had merely been held up, not prevented.

At the time the question was raised whether Albania was to submit to the leaders of the Soviet Union or go its own way, the economic situation was extremely critical. Albania was short of bread, and the Soviet leaders said: "Grain? Sure, grain's no problem. Just sign on the dotted line and mind what comes out of your mouths and you can have it. You Albanians don't eat more grain than the rats do in our country."

Khrushchev was in a position to say this. He saw himself as a major politician in a major country.

The Albanian leaders refused to submit to Khrushchev's dictates. They turned to the Albanian people and asked for their support. And got it. The Albanians went on building socialism. But they had to build up their own country in the most difficult external circumstances. In Belgrade the hopes of incorporating Albania had not been written off. In Athens it was being asserted that Greece had been at war with Albania since 1940, and Greece was still demanding southern Albania. Washington was Albania's overt enemy, and now the Soviet Union and Washington were collaborating, and Khrushchev was of the opinion that southern Albania could very well go to Greece. Food was in short supply and Albania's only ally was China.

During the sixties, then, the historical question was not merely how the Albanians had survived the Turks. Many

Balkan peoples had done that. Now the question was how the Albanians had managed to survive at all.

For they had. They were not Greeks. They were not Romans. They were not Bulgarians. They were not Serbs. In the teeth of a history which seemed to have consisted only of conquests and bloodbaths and pillage, the people had survived.

That was why their Illyrian inheritance became so important at the beginning of the 1960s. It also provided them with the assurance that they would overcome their present difficulties.

Talking to Albanian intellectuals, one seems for a moment to be living in the days of our Swedish Gothic Association (1840s): "A fraternal union of men, devoted to the revival of the spirit of freedom of the Old Goths, mainly courage, and an upright mind." But we should bear in mind that neither the Goths nor the Illyrians are myths. For the Albanians, too, it was necessary to find confirmation in their own history that it was possible to survive and go one's own way, despite all the powers.

"After the liberation," Neil Shehu, director of the Historical Museum at Vlora, said, "we went on with the excavations the Italians had begun. One could say we attached greatest importance to such excavations as those at Apollonia and Butrint. These cities are important monuments. But by concentrating on the Greek colonies, our own history was being thrown out. It was as if the colonization had been our own history."

"After 1960 we began asking ourselves what our own history had really been. And our archeologists had to turn to the unknown. This doesn't mean we're neglecting Apollonia or Butrint. But our resources are limited. Now we're stressing other excavations. Before the liberation, only five Illyrian towns were known in Albania. Now we know of thirty. Here in the Vlora district alone we have seven Illyrian towns and thirty Illyrian villages."

"We're also working on our own prehistory. We're carrying out large excavations in that field, too. But it's with the

Illyrian towns our history begins. It is then we appear in written history."

The next day we go on to Amantia. We climb up the mountains. The sun blazes down. It is May 31. And Neil Shehu is still talking:

"The town here is from the fifth century B.C. It lies up here on the mountain top. That was the way the Illyrians built. You can see the big Illyrian stones. They're typical of Illyrian walls. These were fifty-five to sixty-five feet high. The town had two gates. It was impregnable. It had between four and five thousand inhabitants. Do you see the stadium down there? It has sixteen rows of seats. The town's houses were built of brick. The spring was outside the walls. The town was called Amantia. It minted its own coin. It was an important commercial center. Now it's only a village. A little village. But the village has got electricity, as you see. All Albanian villages are being electrified.

"During the war of liberation there were big fights up here in the mountains. The enemy tried to infiltrate us too. Can you see that village on the other side of the valley? Comrade Enver came there in May 1943. Some provocateurs in the leadership of the party district had tried to disrupt the party. They tried to turn the people against the partisans. Actually they were collaborating with Balli Kombetar's reactionaries who had already come to an agreement with the Italian fascists in March 1943. Balli Kombetar promised not to oppose the fascists and the fascists had promised not to oppose Balli Kombetar. Between them they were going to crush the partisans. They even had their men in our party leadership in this district. But then, in May, Comrade Enver got here and exposed the traitors. The following month we were able to see how right Comrade Enver had been. On June 25, 1943, the Italians attacked with eight thousand men. They were thrown back. But on July 14 they attacked again, this time with four divisions and artillery and tanks and aircraft. At the time we had two thousand men. We had to retreat. The Italians burned seventy-eight villages and executed hundreds of people. But they lost a thousand men.

"That was no small struggle during those years. Here at Vlora we lost a thousand men and six hundred were killed in German concentration camps. But the party led the struggle in the right way and in the end we won."

We are sitting in the shade by the well. It's cool in the shade. We drink water. It's good water. Neil Shehu says: "Further down there, on the Vlora road, there were some big fights with the Italians during the 1920 War of Liberation. They tried to take Vlora. But had to get out."

ON FOUNDING A REALM

Skanderbeg's statue stands in the main square in Tirana. Skanderbeg's statue is all over the country. People sing about Skanderbeg. Write poems about Skanderbeg. Write theses about Skanderbeg. Build museums to Skanderbeg.

Under the Turks, Albanian art lived on as icon painting and church painting and decorative embellishment. When, in 1883, the Albanian church painter Jorgji Panariti painted Skanderbeg's portrait in the monastery at Athos, and when the Albanian icon painter A. N. Ballamci painted his fascinating and rightly famous *Skanderbeg on Horseback*, then Albanian art was reborn.

When Ismail Qemal declared Albania independent on November 28, 1912, and raised the national flag of free Albania in Vlora, the flag he raised was the ancient arms of the Castriots, the banner of Gjergj Castriot Skanderbeg.

When, in July 1942 the Albanian Communist Party turned to the peasantry and exhorted them to take up arms against the occupying forces, the Central Committee's appeal read:

In the same way as our forefathers who fought under Skanderbeg's banner in ruthless struggle against those who had forced their way into our country, so have we, their worthy sons, taken up the fight against the fascist interlopers and traitors to the fatherland, under Skanderbeg's banner, for the real liberation of the Albanian people.

And as the partisans' song went:

Under Skanderbeg's banner, under Enver's leadership.

But who was Skanderbeg? The second edition of the old

Nordisk Familjebok, one of our Swedish encyclopedias, gives an answer; it was printed two years before Albania had achieved national independence.

Kastrioti, George, Albanian national hero, best known under the name of Skanderbeg (from the Turkish Iskenderbeg, "Prince Alexander"), b. shortly after 1403, d. June 17, 1468, at Alession (Lesh), was handed over by his father, Johan K., lord of Mat in northern Albania, as a hostage to the Osman sultan Murad II, who had him brought up in the Muhammedan doctrine. When the latter, even so, refused him the possessions he had inherited from his father (K.'s father had died in 1442), he returned to his own country with three hundred Albanian horsemen after Humyad's victory over the Turks at Nisch (1443) and raised a revolt among his countrymen. On the basis of a *ferman* which he had forced the Sultan's secretary of state to sign by putting a knife to his throat, he got the fortress of Kroja into his hands, re-embraced Christianity, and in a short while became ruler of all Albania and a rampart of Christianity against Islam. Several Turkish armies were thoroughly beaten by him. Murad himself, with one hundred thousand men, tried in vain to overthrow him (1449-1450), and in 1461 Muhammed II was obliged to make peace with him, leaving him in possession of Albania. However, in 1467, K. broke this treaty at the insistence of Pious II and the Venetians, and again fought successfully against the infidel. Some while after his death the Albanians were again obliged to submit to the overlordship of the Osmons, (1479). K.'s son, Johan K., went to Naples, where the last member of the house of K. died in 1873.

This may be true enough. But what it does not explain is how "K." was able to get his compatriots to revolt; nor does it explain how anyone could become an "Albanian national hero," and all this talk of Christianity and Islam is more confusing than explanatory.

Skanderbeg was not alone in greatness and defeat at this time. In Sweden, Engelbrekt led a national rising against the Danes and threw their bailiffs out of the country, only to be deposed and murdered by the Swedish nobility in 1436. In England, Jack Cade led the Kentish men against London and took the city, but was betrayed by wealthy merchants (who were afraid the people would tax them), and Jack Cade was

murdered, and in Kent the mopping up operation known as the "skull hunt" was carried out.

In France, Jeanne D'Arc was victorious, captured by the Burgundians, abandoned by the King of France, handed over to the English, and burned at the stake by the Bishop of Beauvais in 1431.

In Bohemia the Hussites were victorious, but let themselves be bamboozled into negotiations with Church and King and were crushed in 1434.

Skanderbeg was a contemporary of Engelbrekt and Jeanne d'Arc. But not only a contemporary; like them, he came to be regarded by his compatriots for centuries as a great national hero. Yet there is one difference. While Sweden and France were able to take the step out of the Middle Ages and develop into nations—despite the murders of Engelbrekt and Jeanne d'Arc—Skanderbeg's death was the beginning of a five-hundred-year national humiliation. For Sweden and France the "national question" was solved several centuries before it could be solved in Albania. Among other things, this meant that the same national slogans that played a positive and progressive role in Albania toward the end of the nineteenth century were negative and reactionary slogans in France and Sweden at the same time. This is why Naim Frasheri's *Historia e Skanderbeut* was a progressive and patriotic poem, while our Swedish poet Heidenstam's *The Carolinians* was a reactionary and nationalistic poem tending toward the oppression of the people.

Skanderbeg was involved in his great struggle in the fifteenth century; it was the century in which the feudal aristocracy was going down in England and France. It was then that the modern national states of Europe were founded and the bourgeoisie began to appear as a class. The princes of Moscow began to unite Russia, which freed itself from the Yellow Horde. It was the century of Gutenberg and the early Renaissance.

Skanderbeg was born about the time Tamerlaine died and the Timurid world empire fell to pieces. He died at the same time Alphonso V of Portugal was renting out the entire

Guinea coast to the merchant Farnao Gomes, and Lisbon became a great market for African slaves.

Tamerlaine and Portugal; the framework is not chosen capriciously. The Mongol peace had made Genoa rich. Its merchants were stationed in China and India. Its traders sold Chinese silk in the markets of western Europe. When the Mongol dynasty was overthrown in China in 1368, this trade was shut down. The wars in central and western Asia made it unsafe, and in 1428 the price of pepper rose by 60 percent in the market at Alexandria.

The long struggle between Genoa and Venice for the fur trade in the Black Sea and the pepper trade with Asia had ended in a Venetian victory. The Venetian oligarchy had already crushed both popular and petty-bourgeois resistance. Venice was mistress of the Mediterranean. As the fourteenth century came to a close, Venice was obliged—for the sake of its commerce—to conquer Corfu and the Dalmatian coast. To secure its own grain supply, it was obliged in the early fifteenth century to conquer its agricultural hinterland: Verona, Padua, Ravenna, and so forth. It was the requirements of commerce and the interests of the oligarchy that decided Venetian policy—conquests and declarations of war, as well as alliances and peace treaties.

It is incorrect to say that it was the Turks' capture of Constantinople that put an end to Venice's trade with Asia. The Turks were just as anxious as the Venetians for this trade to go on (even if they fought over the profits). It was not until 1453 that the Turks took Constantinople, but the price of pepper had begun to rise several years before that. The Venetian oligarchy had had to declare war on Genoa because that city had been trying to find alternative trade routes to Asia. The Venetian oligarchs' policy was based on preserving their pepper monopoly. And this was something Venice could only do in collaboration with Alexandria and Constantinople.

As the century closed, Portugal smashed this pepper monopoly. Yet the sea route did not become profitable just because the Venetians and the Turks had forced the price

sky-high. They made desperate attempts to preserve their monopoly. If the sea route became profitable, it was because the caravan routes were blocked by wars, and commercial crises had hit Venice *before* Vasco de Gama returned to Portugal with spices from India in 1499. In 1496, Turkish income from trade fell by 16 percent, and in that same year the spice bazaar in Cairo had to close down, Italian bankers went bankrupt, and the price of pepper shot upward. This crisis in the eastern Mediterranean was not precipitated by the new trade route. Yet it was the ever graver crisis that determined the whole of Venetian policy in Skanderbeg's time.

If one speaks of Skanderbeg's twenty-five-year struggle against the Turkish overlords as "a struggle of Christianity against the infidel," then Venice's behavior remains as inexplicable as the Pope's. In that case the "Empress of the Mediterranean" would have been under the government of "bad" Christians, and the whole thing sinks to the level of a question of morals. But Venetian—and Papal—policy were not determined by anything as other-worldly as religion. The Venetian oligarchs' foreign policy was clear and simple.

The Fourth Crusade, 1201–1204, was launched to crush Byzantium. Byzantium was in conflict with Italian commercial interests. Therefore, in the summer of 1201 the Cistercian abbot Martin, from the monastery of Pairis in the Voges, traveled about in the German countries on Pope Innocent III's behalf and preached as follows:

My lords and brothers, allow me to say a word. Yes, let me say just one word! However, not my own word, assuredly not my own word, but the word of Christ. Christ himself has given me the words; I am nothing but his feeble instrument. Today Christ himself is speaking to you through my mouth, with his own words he is speaking and complaining of the injustice that has been done to him.

Yet it was no god that spoke out of the abbot's mouth; it was the pepper trade that had disguised itself in the sufferings of Christ because Venice needed help in crushing its Christian competitor. And crushed it was. In 1204, that is, the Chris-

tian armies captured Christian Constantinople in the name of pepper; and that, at long last, was the end of the Roman Empire, and treasures and manuscripts were shipped westward.

The decay of the Byzantine Empire during the twelfth century had contributed to the development of an Albanian feudal nobility that, in 1190, was able to set up the Principality of Arbëria, with its capital at Kruja. The capture of Constantinople in 1284 hastened this feudal development; in the Balkans various types of states came into being and collapsed, and within less than a person's lifetime, such powerful empires as Stefan Dushan's (Imperator Romaniae Slavoniae et Albaniae) came into being, flourished, and decayed. But this feudal chaos was only the outward aspect of a real development.

In Albania agricultural output was increased, new soil was put to the plough, new tools were introduced. In the valleys and lowlands the power of the feudal lords was strengthened. The peasants were tied to the soil. The power of the great feudal lords grew in a chaotic struggle. In the course of incessant feuds, first one lord, then another was driven out, until in the end only a small number of families controlled the country. The most powerful of these lords minted their own coins and flew their banners over their castles. One of these banners was the Castriots' spotted eagle on a red ground, which was one day to become the national symbol of the People's Republic of Albania.

But as their rule became more extensive and their power even greater, these powerful lords also began to transform themselves into grain merchants and exporters of salt. For trade was flourishing and new trading cities were growing up.

These cities were jealous of their privileges. The citizens were not serfs. They appointed their own governing councils. Yet as trade grew, and with it the power of the feudal nobility, the popular assemblies in Albania's cities were overthrown and power fell into the hands of an oligarchy.

What was peculiar about this Albanian course of events was that large parts of the country's population did not con-

sist of serfs. Interspersed among the lords' estates were villages of peasants who owned their own lands, and mountain folk who lived in patriarchal clans. They were armed and, sword in hand, defended themselves against the new lords—as they had defended themselves against all the country's earlier rulers. Abroad, the Albanians were described as a quarrelsome people, constantly in revolt against authority.

The great lords were constantly involved in internecine feuds, and one could say that Albania was on the point of founding itself as a realm. As the fourteenth century drew to a close, only three principalities remained, all at war with one another. The most powerful lord was Karl Thopia, who called himself Prince of Albania and was recognized as such by foreign powers. But he allowed a shipyard to be established on the Adriatic. And therefore it became necessary for Venice to crush him, and therefore Venice supported Gjezgi II of the Balsha clan from Shkodra (Scutari). Karl Thopia lost Durres, lacked allies, turned to the Turks, who had reached as far as to Macedonia, and they intervened. Their war machine crushed the army of the Principality of Shkodra at Savra, and in 1385 they killed Gjezgi II. But Karl Thopia's victory, instead of leading to the founding of the Kingdom of Albania, led to the country's annihilation.

On August 29, 1389, the decisive battle was fought at Kossova. Czar Lazar of Serbia was at the head of the united armies of the Balkans: a hundred thousand men, Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, Romanians. The Albanian nobility was under the command of two princes, Balsha II of Shkodra and Theodor Muzaka of Berati. The forty thousand Turks were led by Sultan Murad I. Czar Lazar was killed in battle. The Balkan army was utterly defeated. Sultan Murad I was murdered by a Serbian during his victory parade. His son Bayazid had himself proclaimed sultan and immediately executed his brother Yakub in order to secure his own power.

The immediate consequence of this defeat was that in various ways and using various methods (intrigues, bribery, pressure), Venice occupied the towns of Albania. For to Venice it was crucial to have the Adriatic ports under its control.

The principalities fell to small feudal powers and soon became Turkish vassals and some became Venetian vassals and some preserved a precarious independence and all of them were always at war with each other.

When we say the Turks were victorious, we must bear in mind who these Turks were. They were Osmans. They were not a people. The Turks were a well-organized military bureaucracy, a military-feudal despotism held together by an efficient hierarchy, with Osmanli as their official language and language of command, and Islam as their official religion.

The Osman (Ottoman) Kingdom recognized no peoples, not even the Turkish people. And it was perfectly correct for Kemal to be called Atatürk, the Father of the Turks. Not until after World War I could the Turks really form a nation. Then the word Osman was forbidden and replaced by Turkish. It was then Turkey became Turkish. But in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Osman rulers had at their command their epoch's most highly perfected machine for conquest and occupation.

The power of the Osmans was based on land ownership. In the countries they conquered, they transferred the ownership of the land—irrespective of who owned it—to the sultan. (Exceptions were made for small private strips of land and for soil whose yield went to religious institutions.) The sultan then parceled out the land in fiefs as a reward for personal service, military and civil. The fief was tied to the office—it could not be inherited or sold. Anyone who did not do his job properly could lose his fief.

The peasants had the right to till the soil—but only as long as they paid the lord of their county and did other forced work.

In the sultan's name, therefore, the real lord of the land was the Osman feudal class, as a collective. The peoples they ruled also had to pay blood-tax, i.e., hand over to the Osmans children who could be brought up in special barracks. These became the most faithful defenders of the Osman Empire.

The order of command was clear and simple. The sultan ruled over the realm. Under him came official upon official,

in their various grades. As long as this system functioned—gradually it was to decay—it was a most efficient form of collective exploitation and permanent occupation.

To begin with, Albania was not incorporated into the realm. It was treated as a vassal region, and by and large the Albanian lords were allowed to retain their privileges. They also went on with their internecine strife.

Some time was to pass before Albania was subjected to the Osman system. In 1402 the Osman army had suffered a defeat at the hands of Tamerlaine's troops, which were more ably commanded. Outside Ankara the Sultan Bayazid and many of his generals were taken prisoner. The sultan died in captivity. Tamerlaine withdrew to Samarkand, and Sultan Bayazid's five sons began a struggle for succession. By 1413 three of the sons had fallen. Then the fourth conquered the fifth and became Sultan Muhammed I.

These disputes gave Albania borrowed time, during which Gjon Castriot extended his own power, made a treaty of friendship with Venice, recognized Muhammed I as his overlord, and acted as a mediator between Venice and Serbia. Muhammed I died in 1421 and was succeeded by his son, Murad II. In 1423, Gjon Castriot accepted Murad II as his overlord. But all that was required of him was an annual tribute, and that he hand over his son Gjerji as a hostage to the sultan, to be brought up as an Osman prince.

In 1428 the struggle between Osmans and Venetians for Salonika began. In March 1428, Murad II took Salonika. The war went on and Gjon Castriot allied himself with Venice and attacked the Osmans. But Venice concluded a peace with the sultan in order to be able to retain Durres and its possessions in Albania. Gjon Castriot was defeated. He lost castles and manors and large regions of land, but changed his name and religion and was resurrected as the Osman feudal lord Hamsa.

After suppressing Gjon Castriot's revolt, Murad II decided to introduce the normal Osman order into Albania. In 1431, land books were drawn up and a census of the population was carried out. The land became the sultan's.

The *sandjak* of Albania was divided up into ten *vilayets*.

Each of these was ruled by a military governor, a *soubash*, with the aid of a *kadi* who acted as religious overseer, head of administration and justice. In the *sandjak* of Albania, 335 fiefs were granted. These fiefs comprised between 2 and 107 villages. About 300 of these fiefs were given for military service, the rest for civil service.

Of these 335 fiefs, 26 were given to Albanian noblemen who had converted to Islam, 56 were given to Christian Albanians, and 250 were held by Osmans of non-Albanian origin. Among those who had converted and obtained fiefs were the former Albanian feudal lords.

One might say that this new order of things implied the liberation of the peasants. But in that case the word "liberation" is used in much the same way the word "redundant" is used to mean unemployed—because this new order liberated the peasants from their last ties with their own land. Earlier, they had been serfs and, as such, tied to the soil; at the same time this meant that the soil was tied to them. Now they were tied only to their deliveries, to production. Their "liberation" meant that they could be thrown off their land. Or, to put it another way, they gained the right to leave their land. This new Osman order was the last stage in the Albanian peasant's loss of his own land.

As the new order was introduced, taxes were regulated, along with customs dues and a system of fines. The pressure on the peasantry increased enormously. In 1432 Isa Beg Kurtik, *soubash* for the *vilayet* of Pavlo-Kurtik (the lord of the house of Kurtik who had converted to Islam) accounted for the following income from his fief of 107 villages, consisting of 1,253 families:

Personal tax	
(25 akcha* for Christians,	
22 akcha for convert families)	30,793 akcha
Personal tax for the Krapan province	3,413 akcha
Grain dues	20,000 akcha

* One akcha (the smallest silver coin) was about one gram of silver, and eighty akcha were the equivalent to about one Venetian gold ducat.

Dues on corn and rye	6,000 akcha
Dues on flax	1,000 akcha
Dues on vine harvest	8,000 akcha
Dues on olive oil	3,000 akcha
Dues on pigs	1,000 akcha
Fines levied	3,000 akcha
St George's jetty	4,950 akcha
Virgin Mary market	150 akcha

This was Isa Beg's *verbal* declaration; it does not tell us how much he *really* extorted from the peasants. Nor does it include all extra dues, taxes and tolls (marriage taxes, mill taxes, etc.). The new order meant the total impoverishment of the peasantry.

At the same time the terms of trade declined, and the cities' merchants and craftsmen were hard hit by the new dues.

Some of the former feudal lords (like Isa Beg himself) went over to the collectively exploitative Osman feudal class. In 1437, for example, Jakub Beg—son of the Prince of Berat, Theodore Muzaka, who had fought at Kossova—became *sandjak bey* for the whole *sandjak* of Albania.

However, we should note that these lords could not pass on their fiefs hereditarily. Nor did they enjoy them for life. Their lands were strictly tied to their office.

Another section of the former feudal lords lost a large part of their property. The balance lost everything. That is to say, this new Osman order meant an expropriation both of the feudal lords and of the peasants, and an increased economic burden on merchants and craftsmen. The Osman military machine was efficient, but it was also expensive to maintain, and the expansion had to go on.

The new order immediately led to revolts and riots. But these were not coordinated; nor could the feudal lords rise above their feudal short-sightedness and overcome their internecine strife. This was why the revolts could be crushed—with some difficulty—by the Osman military machine. But many peasants fled into the mountains. There the clans were still in control and the new Osman order did not reach that

far. In the plains and valleys many villages were left wholly or completely abandoned.

When, in the 1430s, the peasants at Mysje declared that they, as their own masters, did not accept "men from foreign countries or such as are not of our count's family," they were expressing—in feudal thinking—their class demands. It was to this Albania that Skanderbeg returned. On November 28, 1443, he had himself proclaimed the free and independent prince of Kruja.

Skanderbeg was a brilliant man, politically and militarily. He had also received the best possible military education in the Osman military machine. He had commanded in battle and enjoyed his superiors' confidence in high position as an administrator. Now he declared himself independent and took up the struggle against the Osman empire. It might seem as if this was just one revolt among all the others: a lord of the Castriot heritage was prepared to fight for his own interests, as a Castriot and a prince. But during the twenty-five years that were left to his life, he proved himself capable, within this specific historical situation, of rising above the limitations of his feudal classmindedness and of trying—and almost succeeding—to implement the historically necessary establishment of an Albanian state.

The foreign policy situation was complicated. The Osman Empire was designed to be a continuously conquering war machine. After the Osmans had taken Gallipoli in 1355, they never ceased advancing into Europe. For a while Tamerlaine's attack had disoriented the Osman forces and given Constantinople borrowed time; but now, even in Asia, the Osman military machine was on the offensive. For brief intervals, defeats could check this advance; but in the end, it seemed irresistible.

Albania was necessary as a base, partly for the occupation of Greece and Serbia, partly for an invasion of Italy.

Venetian policy was dictated by commercial interests. The sultan's victories threatened Venice, but they also brought Venice a massive income. The fall of Constantinople was assured. Short-term Venetian losses could be balanced by short-

term gains from the panic-stricken victims of the Osman conquest. In the long run, the Venetians and the Osmans had a common interest in maintaining trade. Venice—when it suited—fought the Osmans, and was only too happy to exhort others to do the same, and—when it suited—made peace treaties with the Osmans.

The Pope's primary interest lay in crushing the Orthodox Church—or, as one might also put it, in restoring his sovereignty over that church. He could incite the peoples of Europe to crusades against the Osmans, but even these crusades were part and parcel of the general political game being played by the Roman Church.

During the years 1439 to 1442 the Osmans had advanced into Hungary. The feudal lords of Hungary had not been able to unite to repel them; their chief interest lay in preventing a reinforcement of the royal power in Hungary. In 1442, however, the Polish king, Vladislav, had contrived to consolidate, politically and militarily, his power in Hungary, and in the autumn of 1442 the Osman army was defeated by the combined Polish, Serbian, Vlachian, and Hungarian armies, led by Hunyad, *voyvod* of Transylvania. Great regions were liberated from Osman rule.

The Pope made diplomatic efforts—through his bishops—to prevail on the various feudal lords of the Balkans to join Hunyad and rise against the Osmans. For Hunyad's victory was not only a victory over the Osmans, but also a victory for the Roman Catholic over the Orthodox Church.

In Albania, too, the feudal lords had risen against the Osmans. It was in this situation that Skanderbeg, at the head of three hundred Albanian knights, broke away from the Osman army and rode to Kruja.

In the autumn of 1443 and spring of 1444, the greater part of Albania was cleared of Osman troops by the Albanian feudal lords.

The great Hungarian successes against the Osmans, the Albanians' own successes, the Pope's own diplomacy, and Venice's support (however dubious) created a situation in

which it seemed possible to drive the Osmans out of the Balkans.

Skanderbeg summoned an assembly at Lesh. On March 2, the Albanian princes, the great feudal lords, and the representatives of the mountain clans assembled in the cathedral. They managed to overcome their own antipathies and formed an "Albanian League," in order, together with the Hungarians, to throw the Osmans out of the Balkans. It was the first national manifestation in Albanian history.

The assembly had been summoned with the support of Venetian diplomacy—the city of Lesh was under Venetian control. However, it was no part of Venetian policy to join in a major coalition against the Osmans. The Venetian oligarchy had their own interests to consider. To them, the "Albanian League" was just a pawn. Venice entered into negotiations with the sultan, pointed out the threat from the "Albanian League," and proposed that Venice take over the protection of the towns of Vlora, Kanina, and Gjirokastra. But the sultan, as it turned out, was loathe to hand these cities over to Venice.

The Albanian princes had not founded an Albanian kingdom. They had merely entered into a loose political alliance. Yet it was the first in Albanian history. The league was an association among equal parties, each of which remained independent. Yet Skanderbeg had managed to get himself appointed commander-in-chief, and a war treasury was established. Thus, within the league was sown the seed of an Albanian kingdom.

In the spring Skanderbeg assembled his army and set up a network of spies throughout the country. On June 29, 1444, this new Albanian army of ten thousand men met the Osman army of twenty-five thousand men in battle. It was a sanguinary one. The Osmans lost seven thousand men, and five hundred were taken prisoner. The Albanians lost thirty-eight hundred men, but were victorious. Skanderbeg's prestige grew.

On July 12, 1444, the Hungarians signed a ten-year peace

treaty with the sultan, but, together with the Albanians and the Pope, immediately began to prepare for the final campaign against the Osman Empire. The Pope's fleet was to interrupt communications between Asia and Europe, the Hungarian-Polish forces were to attack from the north, and Skanderbeg was to attack from the rear. On November 10, 1444, the Osmans were victorious, King Vladislav fell on the battlefield, and the remainder of the Hungarian army got away only with difficulty. Skanderbeg was forced to retreat into Albania. In 1445, and again in 1446, Skanderbeg succeeded in defeating the Osman forces that had been sent to recover Albania.

The victories of the Albanian League, and Skanderbeg's growing prestige and power within the league, were becoming a threat to the policies and interests of the Venetian oligarchy. A united Albania would mean the loss of Venice's power over the Albanian coastal towns, and this would be a direct threat (more serious than the Osman) to Venetian control over the Adriatic trade routes.

Venice therefore secured its power over the city of Danje, above Shkodra, and utilized its own diplomatic channels to try to explode the Albanian League and get Skanderbeg deposed. In the autumn of 1447, war broke out between Venice and the Albanian League.

Skanderbeg allied himself with the despot of Serbia and the King of Naples—who in his turn was an ally of Milan, which was at war with Venice over Lombardy. Venice contacted the sultan and urged him to resume his war against the Albanian League and reconquer Albania. On March 4, Venice promised a life pension of one hundred gold ducats a month to anyone who could kill Skanderbeg.

Venice resumed peace negotiations with Skanderbeg, but bided its time while waiting for the Osmans, as they had promised, to invade Albania. In June 1448 a large Osman army, commanded by the Sultan Murad II, marched into Albania. Whereupon Skanderbeg invaded Venetian territory with ten thousand men, encouraged the serfs to rise up against their Venetian overlords, and thoroughly defeated the

Venetian army. Then he returned to resume the struggle with Murad II. In view of the Osman's numerical superiority, Skanderbeg avoided a decisive battle; he contented himself with petty warfare—guerrilla warfare.

When Hunyad again gathered his Hungarian forces, Murad II had to withdraw from Albania. Skanderbeg made peace with Venice, which promised to pay an annual pension of fourteen hundred gold ducats. Skanderbeg was allied with Hunyad against the Osmans and Hunyad now exhorted his ally to join him. But the peace negotiations with Venice had been protracted. The despot of Serbia, who was hostile to the Hungarians and wanted to keep his own good relations with the Osmans, prevented Skanderbeg's troops from passing through his district. He also kept the sultan informed of Hunyad's and Skanderbeg's movements, and Skanderbeg did not arrive before the Hungarian army was defeated and Hunyad was imprisoned by the despot of Serbia. In revenge, the Albanian troops devastated large areas of Serbia.

I have no intention of continuing this account to cover the wars and foreign policies of the following quarter century. It has, however, been necessary to show that these fifteenth-century Balkan wars cannot be described in terms of "Christians" against the infidel.

That the Osman Empire—that military-feudal despotism, that well-organized military and occupation machine—really was a dangerous threat to Europe, is another matter. By pinning down large Osman armies in Albania—up to one hundred thousand men at a time—for a quarter of a century, Skanderbeg and his Albanian army came to be a shield for Italy and central Europe. And that was how the more clear-sighted politicians regarded Skanderbeg's role in European history; and that is how, even more clearly, it appears in the light of later developments. The Albanian wars put a brake on the Osman advance.

Skanderbeg was an able commander-in-chief and politician. With small resources he carried on a long and successful war against the world power of his day. But he was more than an

able commander-in-chief and a politician. He founded a state. From having been *primus inter pares*, *capitaneus generalis* of the Albanian League's feudal lords, he developed into the omnipotent ruler of Albania.

The war made it necessary for him to limit the powers and privileges of the feudal lords. His own power, instead of reposing on his role as a Castriot, progressively came to be founded on his historic task as commander of the Albanian forces.

The gathering at Lesh had been a voluntarily assembled league of high lords. When their shifting interests came into conflict with the interests of the war, Skanderbeg had to repress them, and their place was taken by a lower nobility which held its fiefs directly from Skanderbeg. It was also directly attached to the new centralized state which Skanderbeg step by step was forced to create in order to carry on the war.

The high nobility had found it beyond their capabilities to implement a scorched earth strategy. But Skanderbeg's own lower nobility could follow him in this. The conflict with Venice was not personal; it was inevitable. The necessities of war also forced Skanderbeg to draw the cities into the economy of Albania's defenses. It was peasants, clerks, craftsmen, and the new lower nobility who formed the social base for his long war. Skanderbeg began the war as a feudal lord and a Castriot; he had gone to war to defend his own feudal rights. But the war forced him to carry out a policy which led to a social restratification, to the fall of the great lords and the foundation of an Albanian state.

We have no need to romanticize Skanderbeg, to "cleanse" him of his feudal traits, to make him into a hero who from the outset was conscious of his own historic mission. His greatness lay in his ability, under the duress of war, to transcend the feudal narrowness of vision and carry through a policy that lay in the interests of the classes then coming into power. He was able to defend the people against the Osmands' plundering of the country. The great lords could not even defend themselves.

To carry on a successful war with a small force against a military superpower demands tactics and weapons other than those the feudal lords could provide. Guerrilla tactics and light cavalry were Skanderbeg's hallmark. Continual attacks, ambushes, swift intervention, scorched earth, and popular participation (Napoleon thought twice before freeing the serfs in Russia—and rightly—because no one knew where it would end and the destruction of the Grande Armée was the lesser of two evils; but Skanderbeg did not hesitate to raise the serfs against the Venetians and incite them to burn down the lords' manors), all during a long-drawn-out and implacable war—all this pointed toward the future. With Skanderbeg the Albanians took the step out of the Middle Ages.

In 1466, Skanderbeg visited Rome. The war had been going on a long while. The Osmands had devastated Albania. Its population had been decimated. Famine threatened. Skanderbeg needed weapons, ammunition, foodstuffs. But Pope Paul II was "too stingy to give Skanderbeg any support," as Marx has pointed out. Yet the city of Rome accorded him a triumphal entry. Skanderbeg, however, did not enter the city like a medieval commander, in elegant armor. The chronicles note that he "was clad like a poor man," even though at that juncture he was the best known of all Europe's commanders.

One could say that in the long run, after Hunyad's defeat in the autumn of 1444, and with the policies of Venice and the papacy being what they were, the Albanians could not win against the Ottoman World Empire. This, however, is mere speculation; it is being wise after the event. Seen from his own time, Skanderbeg's war yielded possibilities of victory right up to the end.

After Skanderbeg's death and the Albanians' defeat, what was the situation in Albania? The country was more devastated than any other country in Europe. Trade was at a standstill. Many cities had been so utterly destroyed that they were never rebuilt. Churches, monasteries, and castles had been burned down. All wealth had been plundered. Great numbers of people had been killed or had starved to death.

Others had fled. In the years 1444, 1464, and 1468, great waves of refugees poured into southern Italy and Sicily.

Only up in the high mountains could the clans—albeit in extreme poverty—preserve their independence. It would not be until far into the twentieth century that the country was able to reach the level of economic development it had enjoyed at the beginning of the war.

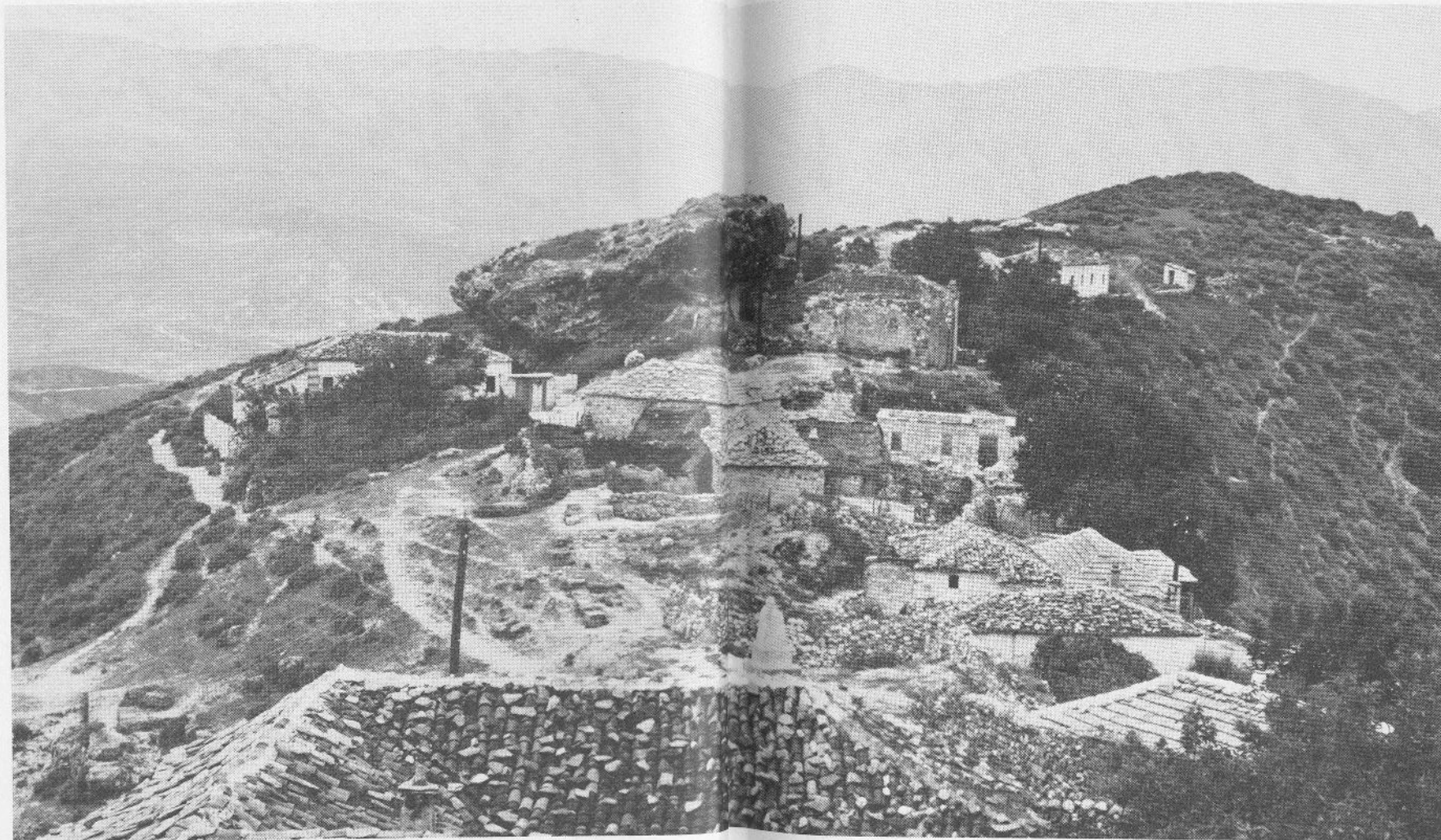
This is a dark picture. Nor does it show the historic importance of what Skanderbeg did. For it was during this war that the Albanian nation came into being. And in the centuries to come, Skanderbeg—for all Albanians, regardless of religion or dialect—was to be Albania's national hero. Nor was this heroic figure a myth. It was during this long and bitter war that Albania became a realm, and it was then that the Albanians became conscious of themselves as a nation. It was this war that made it possible for the Albanians to survive as one.

And this was how the arms of the House of Castriot became the national symbol of Albania. And why, in a new, bitter war, the Albanian partisans sang:

Under Skanderbeg's banner,
under Enver's leadership.



Borshi lies by the sea. A large village in southern Albania, it was burned to the ground by Greeks in 1914, by Italians in 1943, and by Germans in 1944. Of the villagers, nineteen fell as partisans. Of the population, 95 percent used to suffer from malaria; syphilis and tuberculosis were common. The average life expectancy was thirty-three years. Now the marshes have been drained, the village has been collectivized and has become prosperous. The average life expectancy is sixty-six years. The village's party secretary is young; he is also an amateur painter. Oppo-

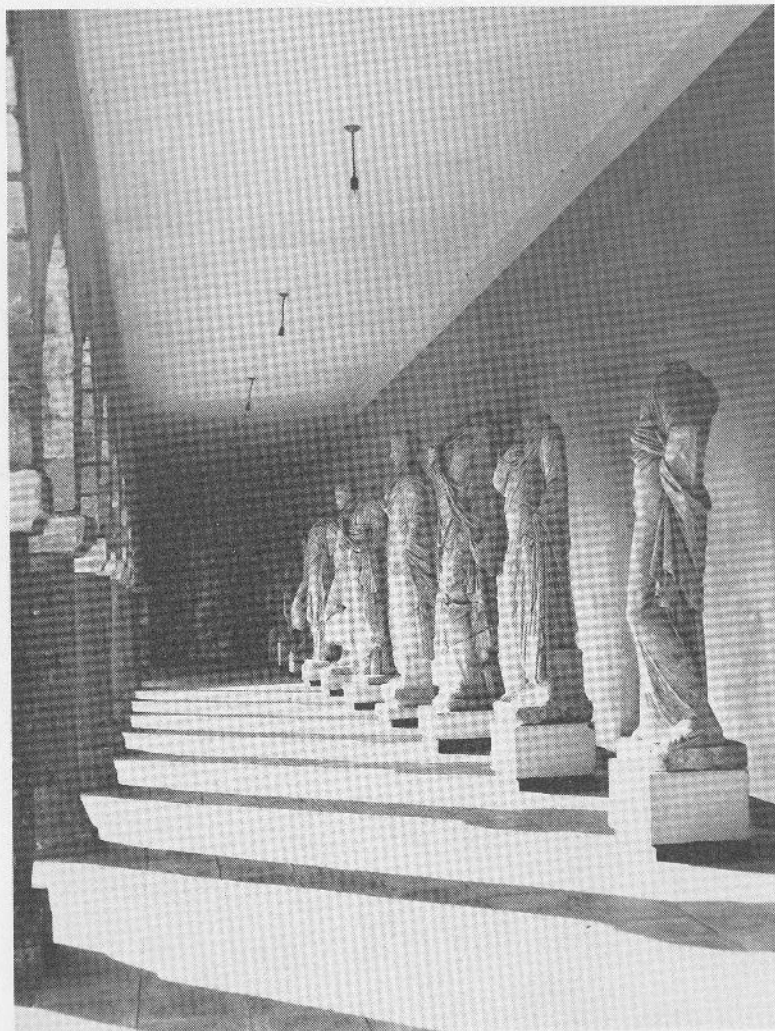


site the café he has painted, in tempera, his own and the other Borshi villagers' view of Albania.

But this view of their own country and people is not a matter of chance—it has not been decided merely as a result of their experiences during the last few decades. The Albanians are a small people. They have their own language, their own territory, their own history, their own culture; but their path to nationhood has been long and troublesome. Where the Illyrian city of Amantia once stood is now only a

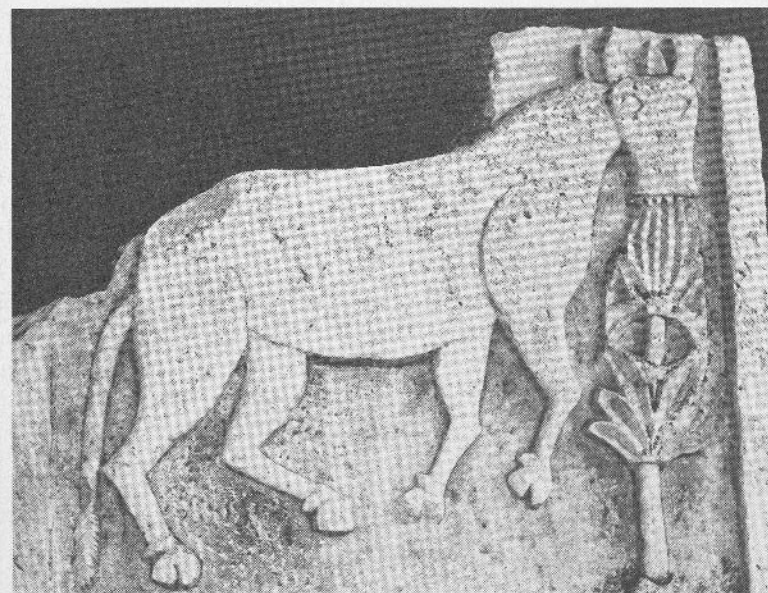
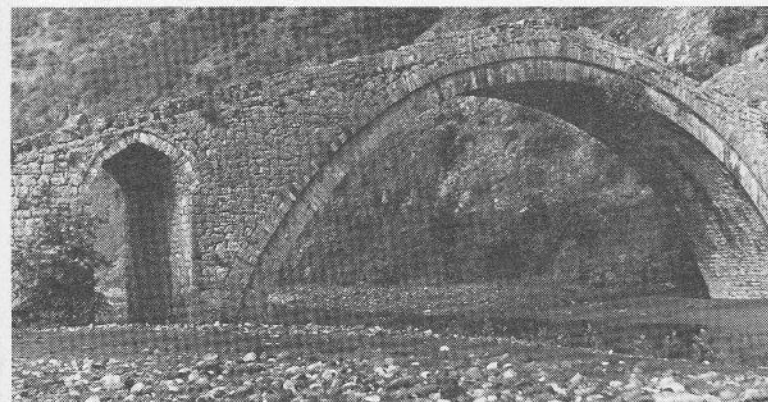
small village. The people are the same, but 2,500 years elapsed between the greatness of the city and the electrification of the village.

They have been 2,500 years of war and conquest. Such is history. But Albania's problem has been that each time an Albanian nation became a historical possibility, it was annihilated by foreign conquest. Yet the Albanian people were not annihilated. Other peoples were conquered; their identity was lost. Where are the Thracians today? The Etruscans? Their culture lives on in other cultures. As ethnic entities



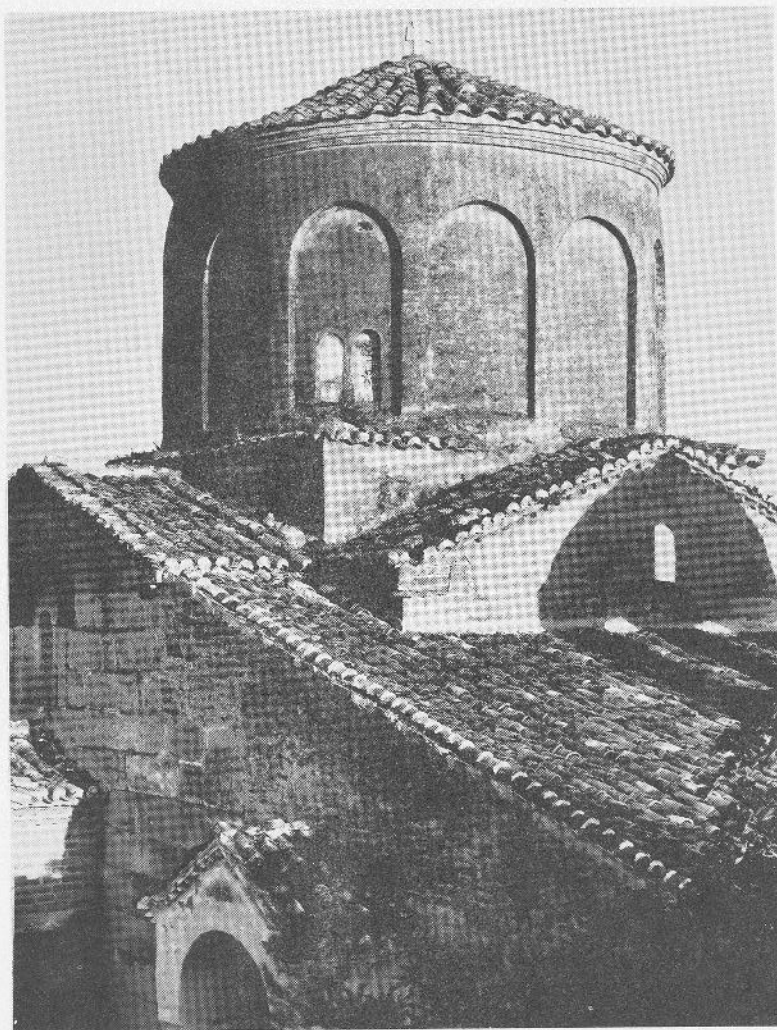
they have vanished. The Albanians have survived all the great migrations, invasions, conquests, and empires.

The Greek trading towns—colonies—in Illyria were wealthy and important cities. When Pausanias in his *Periegesis of Greece* (about 160 A.D.) describes the works of art at Delphi, he points out that the sculptures of Apollo and Callisto were the work of the master Pausanias from Apollonia. The sculptures in the museum in Apollonia were found during the 1958-1959 excavations; those which were found earlier are now, naturally, in Rome, Vienna, or Paris.

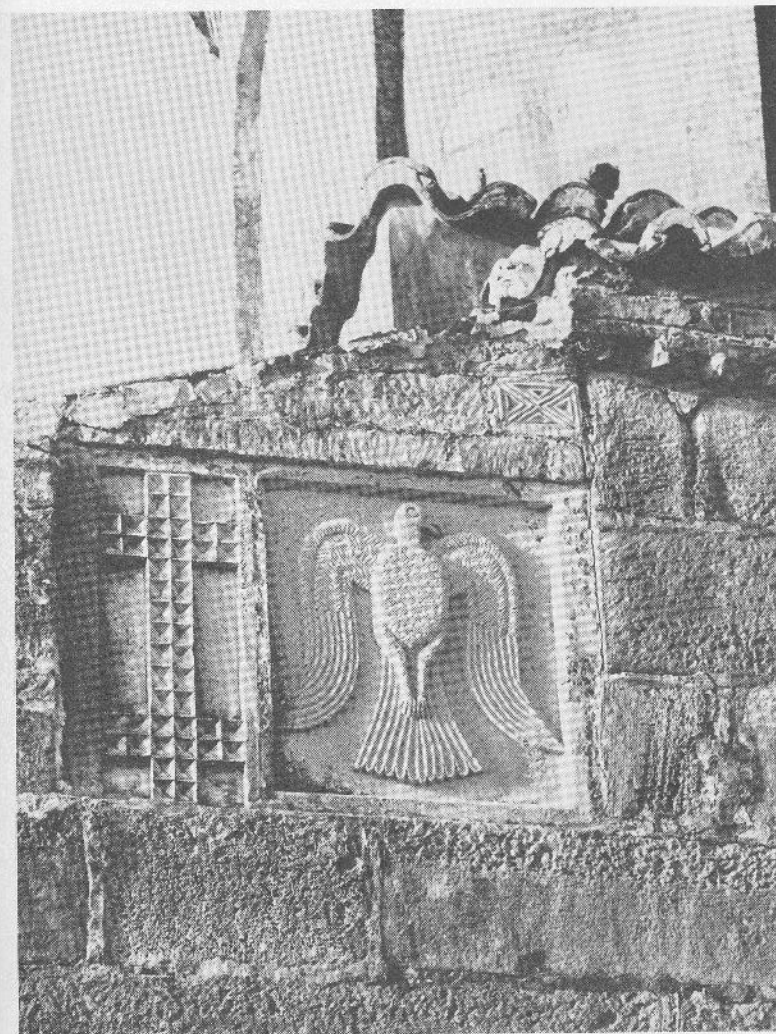


Although much has been devastated, Albania is rich in monuments. The walls of Apollonia's acropolis were still standing in 1944; then the German fascist officers did what the British empire builders had once done at Herat in Afghanistan: they pulled down the monuments to build fortifications. The most famous Illyrian is probably Pyrrhus . . . which perhaps says something. In the Roman era the great trade route, the military road to the east, the *via Egnatia*, started from Durrës, passed through Elbasani, and went on to Salonika.

The monastery at Pojana—ancient Apollonia—was founded by Mi-



chael VIII Palaeologus sometime after 1250. For a long while, Albania formed part of the Byzantine Empire. This Michael is regarded as the man who restored the Byzantine Empire; he drove out the "Latins," whose crusaders had taken Constantinople in 1204. Anyway, he was the commander-in-chief of the French legionnaires in the empire of Nicaea, one of the many empires in the old Rome of the East. He had an adviser to the emperor, who was a minor, murdered and made himself co-emperor and regent, took Constantinople, and blinded his ward.



In this way Michael VIII Palaeologus became Constantine the Younger, filled with the true love of Christ and His monks, as he describes himself in his church.

In the trade wars for furs and spices, he did a balancing act between Genoa and Venice, and it was during his reign that the profound social and economic crisis became steadily more acute.

For at that time no restoration of old forms could change events. Byzantium was, at best, a figment. Feudalism was developing. In Al-



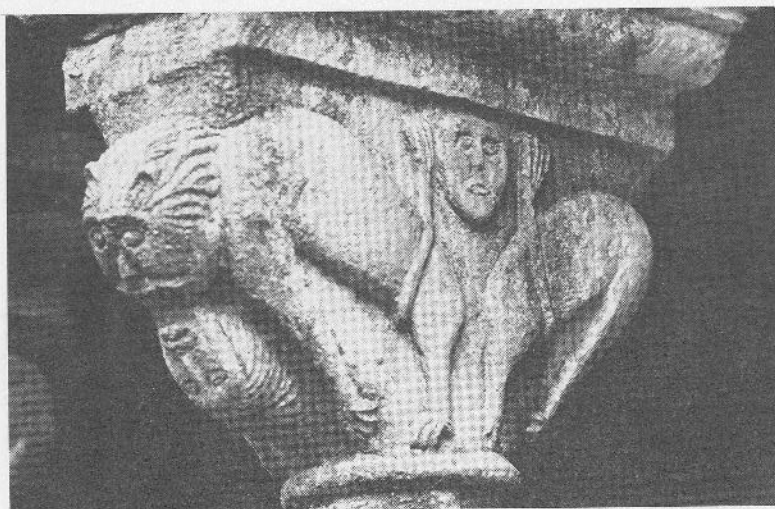
bania, too, the Middle Ages were a time when landlords became feudal princes.

Great power politics were the politics of the Italian trading cities, and they were determined by the spice market and by commerce.

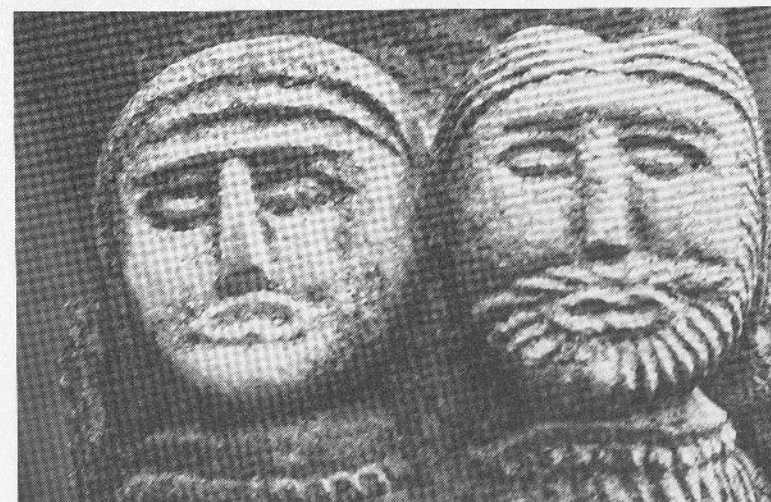
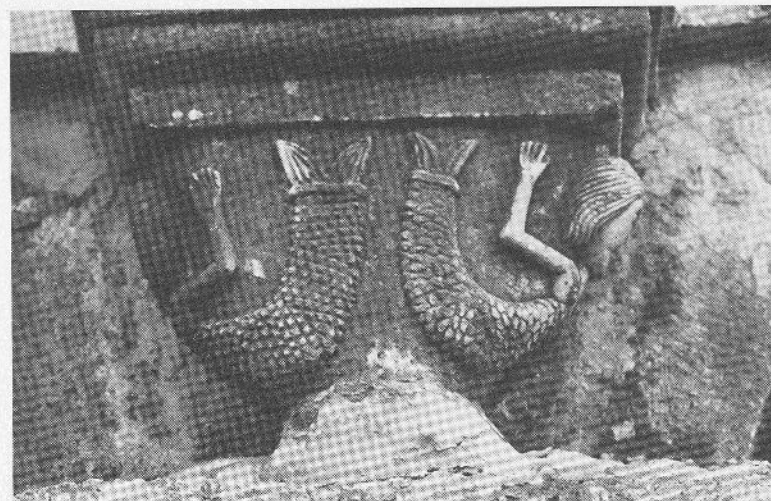
What was developing in Albania was an Albanian state; through and underneath a feudal chaos, an Albanian kingdom was being founded. In this chaos (which was only apparent chaos), the Italian trading cities were playing their game for control of the great market, and the popes were playing their own ecclesiastical power game.

Anyone who goes to church can sometimes hear the Nicene Creed: "And in the Holy Ghost, lord and giver of life, proceeding from the Father and the Son . . ." It is very sacred. Because of it, down the centuries, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians killed each other. For the words "and the Son" were not found in the original text; they were smuggled into the creed by later West European theologians. That was how the Orthodox became orthodox. But people don't kill each other over words alone.

It was Charlemagne's theologians who smuggled in "and the Son,"



for he wanted to create a new Roman Empire and needed an ideology for it. The question whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father (as in the original text) or from the Father and the Son (as in the revised text) was an ideological expression of this struggle for world power. Constantinople was not crushed in "the Son's" interests, but in the interests of the pepper trade. And the popular resistance to the attempted union at the Council of Lyon in 1274 and to the decision to establish a union at the Council of Florence in 1439 was not a theo-



logical resistance; it was a resistance to the colonial lords from Venice and Genoa.

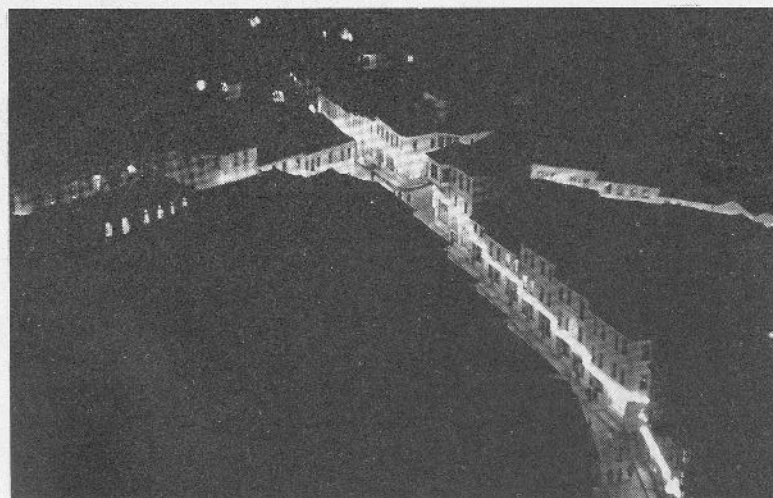
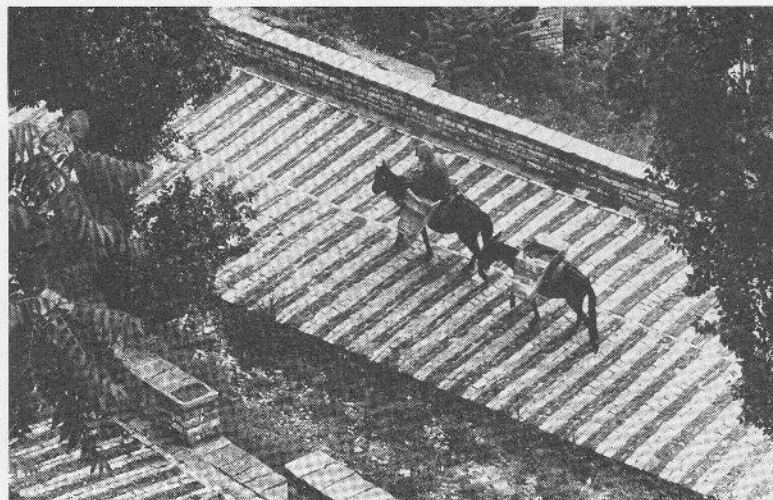
The capitals of the columns in Pojana tell us about the art of medieval Albania. It is not—or at least should not be—alien to us. In those days these gargoyles, variously executed, were grinning down at the faithful in Christian cult places all over Europe. Albania went through the same cultural development as other countries. Its towns grew, its princes kept their courts, its monks prayed, its merchants did business,



and out in the fields its peasants toiled. From the capitals of its churches its gargoyles stared down at believing princes.

But no national state grew out of this feudal chaos. For in the wake of politics the Osman military machine came marching into Europe—now fighting—now allied with—now fighting—now allied with the oligarchy of pepper interests in Venice and the restored papacy in Rome. In 1417, Gjirokastra was occupied by Osman troops.

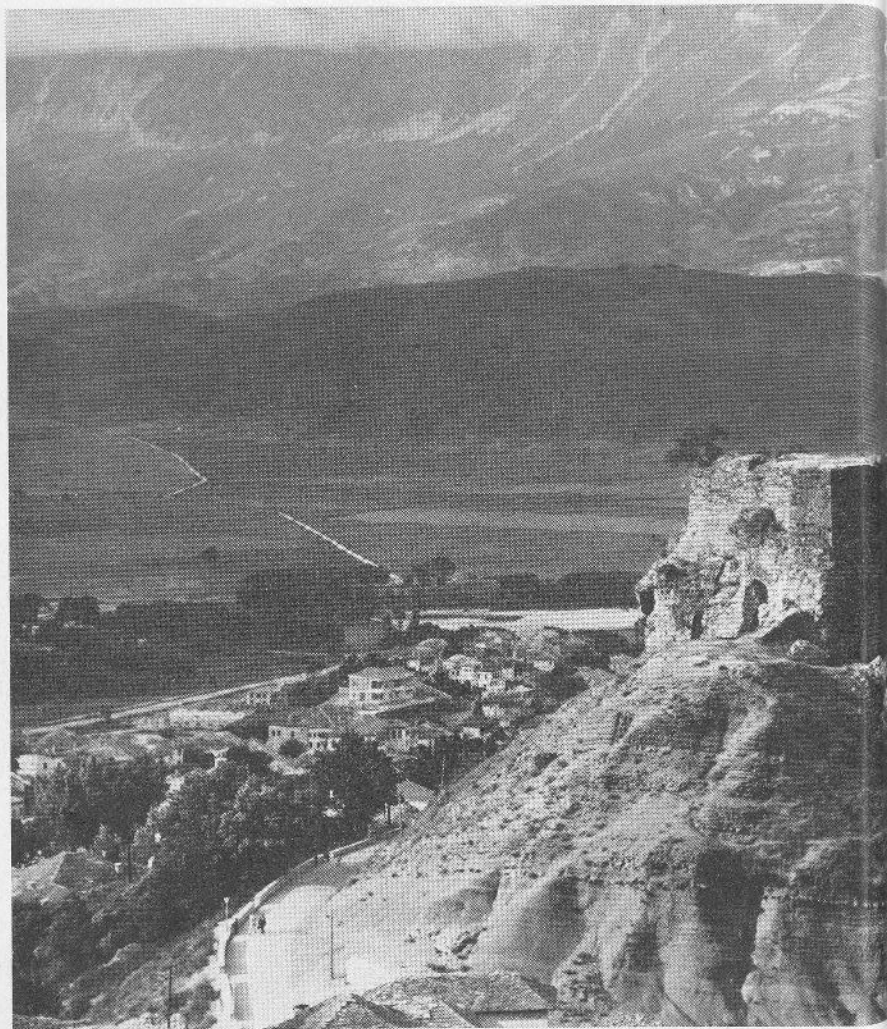
Out of Skanderbeg's long struggle against the Osman Empire in the



fifteenth century an Albanian kingdom seemed about to emerge. The feudal nobility foundered and a centralized state came into being.

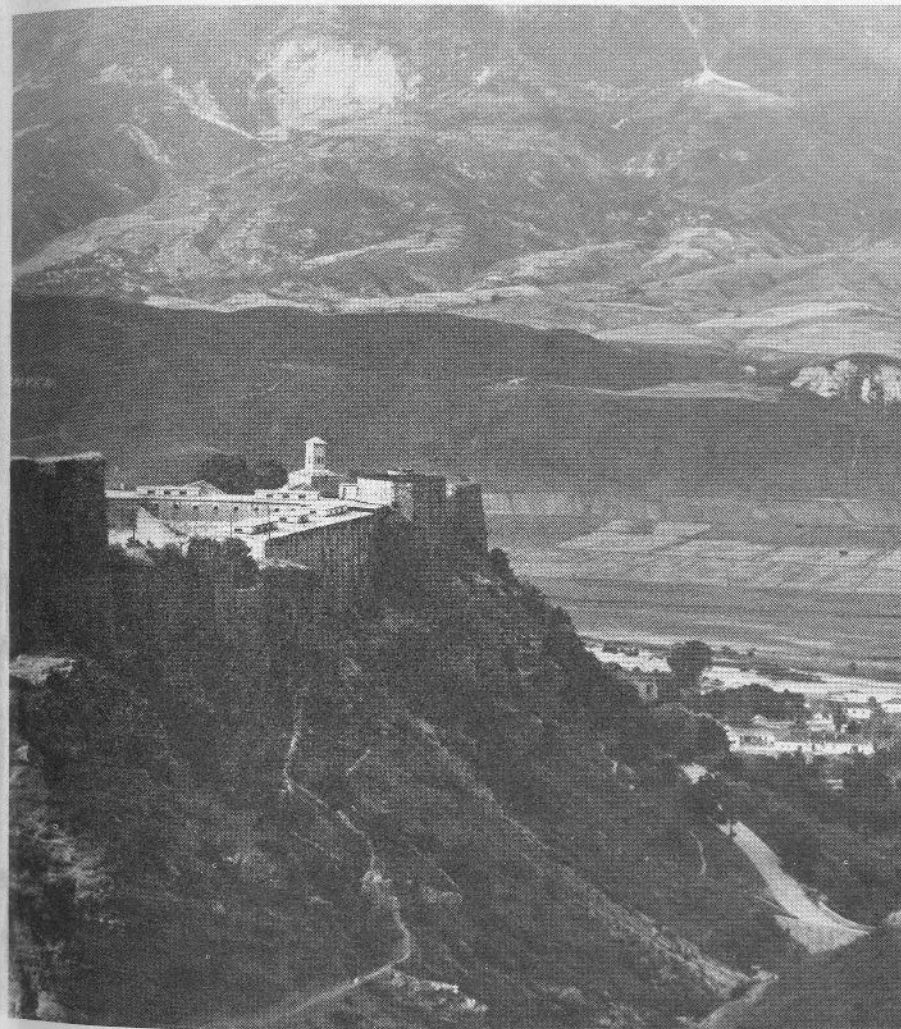
But the Albanians were defeated. The castle at Gjirokastra became the residence of Osman *paschas*, who ruled the country. As the Osman Empire began to collapse internally, the oppression of the people grew worse. Albania became a poverty-stricken peripheral province in an empire that was dissolving.

Poverty, robbers, and plague became its fate. During the eighteenth



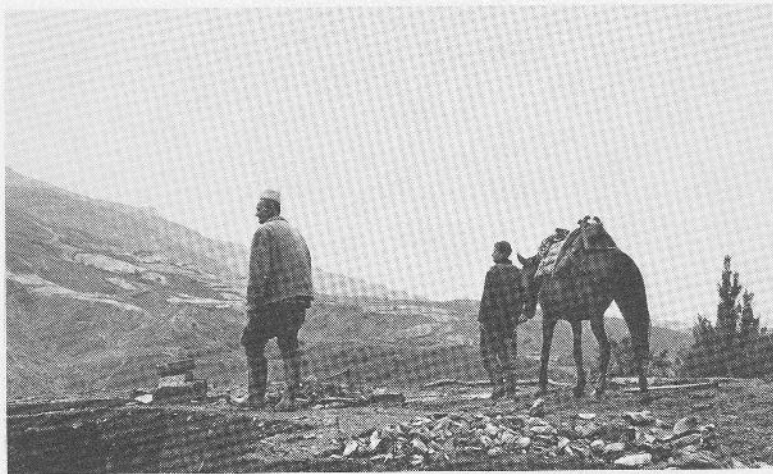
century the greater part of Gjirokastra's population of twenty thousand died of the plague, after which the city vegetated and became a remote provincial town. Its only claim to fame was its fine exported snuff.

During the beginning of the nineteenth century, the power of the *paschas* grew. Ali Pascha at Teyelene seemed to have every prospect of founding a state. After crushing the petty feudal lords, he ruled over them from Gjirokastra's castle with five thousand men, eighty-five cannon, and deep dungeons. But even he lost his power. The time had



passed when feudal lords could unite countries. Instead, Gjirokastra became the home of patriotic teachers who, using the Albanian language as their weapon, tried to unite the country and give the people back their freedom.

During all these centuries the Albanian people had never been completely subdued. Although living in poverty and wretched conditions, the mountain clans had kept their weapons and a certain independence, signified by the extreme reluctance of any outsider—least of all any



official—to show his face in their mountains. Today Skanderbeg's statue stands in the main square of Tirana. The flag of the People's Republic of Albania is the fifteenth-century banner of the house of Castriot. Because in the end, and despite everything, Skanderbeg's Albanians were victorious. They achieved their national independence.

THE DOUBLE DESTITUTION

On January 17, 1468, Skanderbeg died. But the war went on. In June 1478 Kruja fell. On January 25, 1479, a treaty of peace was signed between Venice and the Osman Empire. Venice contrived to keep Durres. At long last the Osman troops could invade Italy. They took Otranto. Again the Albanians revolted. To keep Albania, the Osmans had to divide their forces. In September 1481, the Osmans again lost their foothold in Italy. In 1492 the Sultan Bayazid II arrived at the head of the Osman troops. He was to carry through the invasion of Italy. But never did. Instead, his troops had to suppress the rebellious Albanians. In 1501, Venice lost Durres to the sultan. In 1506, the last Albanian resistance was crushed. For more than sixty years the war had been going on and the troops had passed to and fro across the country.

The defeat was not merely military. During the wars feudal Albania had foundered, and with the high-feudal princes all their art, their culture, and their wealth had disappeared. The unified state, which for a while seemed to have become a reality, had been swept away and Albania had been transformed into the poorest of countries. A country that was not even a country. Only among the Albanian refugees in Italy could the Albanian language and Albanian culture continue to develop.

The war had not had its basis in religion; but religion had been pressed into the service of the ideology of the war of liberation. The conflict between ideology and the Vatican's *realpolitik* were to have consequences. In 1610, the Archbishop of Antivari, Marino Bizzi, reported on conditions in Albania. He maintained that the memory of Skanderbeg still

lived on in songs and poems. He admired the religious processions and the people's love for their church; yet he worried that they might fall away in the future. He reported that the priests were utterly ignorant. They did not even understand the Latin words they used in the Mass. Words had become incantations. The Albanian priests were neglecting the sacraments. They had ceased to give supreme unction. They were permitting marriage within forbidden degrees of consanguinity. They were totally ignorant and completely unable to educate the people in any respect.

The most important thing about this report was that it showed how quickly things had fallen apart within the ecclesiastical apparatus. The people might still have been talking about Skanderbeg and even have been accessible to Christian incantations; but the Church, as a spiritual leader and temporal power, was in decay. Its base had been shattered.

Twenty-two years later the Antonite brother Bonaventura reported that many congregations had not seen a priest in the previous twenty years. Twenty years more, and Marco Crisio reported that even the bishoprics were vacant. Apostasy from the Church was widespread. In fifty years the numbers of the faithful had fallen from 360,000 to 50,000. But the archbishopric of Durres still had 14,000.

On December 3, 1703, the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome discussed the situation in Albania. In 1671 there had been 13,650 souls in the archbishopric of Durres; now there were only 8,000. This was ascribed to Archbishop Galatas' massive neglect of his office. But the deterioration was not limited to Durres. In the see of Sappa the congregation fell from 12,400 in 1651 to 9,230 in 1671, and to 7,971 in 1703. In Shkodra the congregation dwindled from 20,270 in 1671 to 12,700 in 1703.

There were economic reasons for this falling away from Christianity. There was tax relief for those who converted to Islam. But nowhere in the Balkans except in Albania did the Osman conquest lead the Christian churches into almost total bankruptcy. By the eighteenth century an overwhelming majority of the population had left the Christian churches.

All this cannot be explained wholly in terms of taxation. In many other countries the Christians had been exposed to extra dues, and it did not immediately lead to mass conversions.

Nor does it suffice to explain the apostasy—as the papacy's reporters did—in terms of organizational shortcomings in ecclesiastical work and in the schooling of cadres. Nor—as the Congregation de Propaganda Fide did—can the apostasy be explained by pointing out the personal shortcomings of the leading cadres. The apostasy of the Albanian church has a considerably deeper explanation.

During the Middle Ages the church had neither been able, nor had it wished, to be the bearer of a truly national ideology. It had been intimately allied with feudalism. Yet it had acted as the bearer of an overall Christian ideology that implied a struggle against the "infidel."

In most Balkan countries the Church had never been subjected to the ultimate test. There had been wars; armies had wandered to and fro and peoples had been conquered. But in Albania the war against the Osmons had turned into a national war, a lengthy and bitter war; and that had meant the demystification of the Church. For when the Church, during this war, had proved incapable of taking sides (which would have been impossible), religion lost its grasp on the people. They could easily move to a more economically profitable religion. The Church became a representative of obscurantism and exploitation.

Neither then nor later did any of the religious institutions become the bearers of any national or socially progressive ideology. And it is important to bear this in mind: it provides the background to the ease with which anticlerical policies could be carried out during the 1960s.

(Note that the situation in northwestern Europe was quite different. There the Church became an instrument of the historically progressive empires; there the social movements dressed themselves up in religious guise—from Thomas Münzer to the Swedish nonconformist churches. This historical difference is politically important even today.)

The Osman Empire spread out over Europe and Asia. But at the same time its social organization was falling apart. Its strength had lain in its efficient bureaucracy. The military-feudal despotism, with fiefs granted for service, a uniform system of command, and a well-trained army, had been able to subdue country after country and redistribute land-ownership in such a way as to serve the Osman feudal class.

The trade routes were better—above all safer—than those in western Europe. The Osmans did not wish to hinder trade. They wanted to profit by it. And if the Osman lords were not excessively interested in culture, neither were they fanatical. They burned no witches, persecuted no religions. The western European Christians were indignant that the Osmans imposed an extra tax on nonbelievers—Christians and Jews—yet the Osmans sent no heretics to the stake. Religious minorities persecuted in western Europe fled to the security offered within the Osman Empire.

But this efficient and far-sighted feudal-military despotism was destroyed by its own inner tensions. The ruling class was always trying to turn the fiefs it obtained for service into real fiefs. In this way it thought it could secure its own power. Whereas in fact it undermined the very cornerstone of Osman power.

And the situation within the service changed. The centralized administration became a centralized corruption. Appointment to a high position cost a great deal of money. Armenian and Greek bankers financed the *paschas*. With their help a *pascha* could bribe his way into some appointment in the administration. Within the year the newly appointed *pascha* had to repay his loan, with interest and had to obtain money to bribe his way through another year, pay for his expensive household, put aside some capital for bad times, and secure a fortune for his heirs and relations. Corruption and exploitation were erected into a system.

In theory, the Osman administration was efficient, taxes were low, and the soil belonged to the sultan. In reality the pressure on the people was immense. Toward the end of the eighteenth century about half of all production was going to

taxes. Out of the feudal-military despotism's disintegration emerged three intimately connected parasitic classes: capitalistic usurers, landlords, and corrupt officials.

Defeat—total defeat—after the long and bitter wars at the end of the fifteenth century had not merely meant the prevention of Albania's unification into a nation, the occupation of the country by the Osmans, the seizure of the land and the fall of the hitherto powerful Church. The defeat and massive devastation had also thrown the country back centuries in its economic and social development.

Even so, out of the Osman administration's decay yet another aristocracy of landowners arose. Those who had recently been officials obtaining their livelihoods from the sultan's soil began to become owners of that soil, and began to defend their rights to it.

The number of cities dwindled, but in those that remained craftsmen and merchants were again at work. In certain towns the craftsmen specialized—in ornaments and weapons—and the merchants had their products shipped to the major markets.

During the eighteenth century, the craftsmen became strong enough to reconstitute their guilds and choose their own aldermen, and the merchants became great merchants, and Albanian business houses had offices in Venice and Trieste and traded with Italy and Austria.

The religious institutions stabilized. Though the Christian churches gained no new souls, neither did they lose any. They resumed their function in society and expressed the ideological interests of the landowners.

Schools were established and the first printing presses began work. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the time again came for feudal lords to appear on the scene. Once again, landowning families fought each other. Once again, the powerful feudal princes stepped into history. No longer, now, in Christian guise, but in Osman guise. The powerful *paschas* fought among themselves and with the Supreme Porte, and intrigued and made war and were succeeded by their sons, and were crushed and rose again, and Ali Pascha negotiated

with Napoleon. In 1812, Albania was divided between two great feudal princes, *paschas* sufficiently independent to negotiate with foreign powers and follow policies that were in all appearance independent.

It might seem that the situation was now as it had been in the fourteenth century and that Albania was once again on the threshold of statehood and that one all-powerful ruler would arise out of the feudal princes' internecine struggles.

But the world was no longer a world in which feudal lords could lead Albania to national unification and independence. New classes were trying to reach a leading position; the power of the *paschas* rested on a base of corruption and backwardness. At the same time as the Osman Empire had begun to disintegrate under outside pressure and embryonic national movements (after the Graeco-Serbian War of 1829 Greece became independent, and Serbia, Moldavia, and Walachia became largely self-governing; in 1830 France conquered Algeria; in Syria and Egypt national movements were making themselves felt), the political struggle at the heart of the empire grew more acute. Opposition between new commercial capital and the master craftsmen who were becoming capitalists, and the corrupt feudal classes led to the extermination of the Janitsars (twenty thousand were killed) and, in 1826, to the resumption of feudal estates.

In Albania the *paschas* were crushed. The country was ruled as a province of the empire. In 1839, commercial capital in Istanbul managed to prevail on the sultan to issue a decree guaranteeing general equality before the law, abolishing the power hitherto monopolized by the feudal officials, and securing the lives, property, and honor of all the realm's inhabitants.

But the feudal classes were too strong and capitalism was too little developed for this to be the beginning of a bourgeois revolution in the Osman Empire, which was now beginning its transformation into Turkey. In Albania the reforms led only to increased exploitation, and this led to incessant peasant revolts. And while the feudal classes were falling ever

deeper into corruption and reaction throughout the realm, the new bourgeoisie was unable to become strong enough to push through its demands. The empire was already rotten. Therefore reforms were reforms only on paper, bankruptcies became state bankruptcies, foreign interests became steadily more powerful, and Turkey became the "sick man of Europe," whose very existence seemed to hang on the benevolence of the other powers.

Albania was a province of this disintegrating kingdom. It was lawless and inaccessible. Great areas were so unsafe that no official—still less any traveler—visited them for decades. Nor did the Turks recognize such a thing as an Albanian nationality. The Albanians were regarded as three peoples—by religion—Latins, Greeks, and Turks. It was forbidden to teach the Albanian language.

It was a poor and backward country. The will to freedom, which had manifested itself in the mountain clans' obstinate defense against any intruder, had its roots in a destitution so deep that blood feuds, vendettas, and the law of custom still determined people's actions. At the turn of the century (1900) vendettas were so extensive that only 75 percent of the population died of illness. The remainder fell victim to vendettas: tribe against tribe, clan against clan, family against family, for generation after generation.

It was an abysmally poor country; only 6-7 percent of its soil was cultivated. The cities were isolated. Coins were rarities, trade was mostly by barter. In northern Albania the heads of the clans ruled autocratically over their obedient subjects. They had the power of life and death and control over property, and their word was law.

In southern Albania 95 percent of the population were peasants, 4 percent were petty tradesmen and priests, 1 percent were beys. These beys held all the official posts, both civil and military. They owned all the good land. The peasants who cultivated their fields were serfs. And even the "free villages" had to pay dues to these landowners.

The merchants in the villages worked under the local bey's

protection. They also acted as scriveners. They were money-lenders, usurers; and from them came the wealthy urban families.

Banditry was common. Bandits worked in groups of between five and twenty-five, under the leadership of a chieftain. Often they went over to the gendarmerie (because of safer incomes and bigger purses), or became soldiers. When there were problems with drawing their pay, they went back to banditry. The dividing line between bandit, gendarme, and soldier was hard to draw.

The population's main food was corn bread. Sometimes also corn. In good times they ate beans, rice, and vegetables. Meat and fish were only eaten at festivals, most commonly among the Christians. Milk, butter, and cheese were regarded as luxuries. The olive oil was kept until the winter. Naturally, the landowners lived well. They were also known for their lavish hospitality, and many travelers wax eloquent about this charming trait and relate how the magnanimous Albanian chieftains held feasts in their honor.

Its great defeat at the end of the fifteenth century had plunged the Albanian people into a double destitution: a national destitution and a social one. It is out of this double destitution that the Albanian people are raising themselves today, and it is against the traditions left by this destitution that they are fighting today.

But the nineteenth century was not only a century of decay. It was also a century of national renaissance. For the Albanian people existed. And their utter defeat—despite all destitution, or perhaps because of it—had been so profound that they could never forget their special qualities as a nation. Always they were Skanderbeg's Albanians.

THE POWERS' INTERESTS AND THE NATION'S REBIRTH

We fly from Rome to Tirana with a planeload of Turkish members of parliament. They form an official delegation and are received at the airport by ministers and diplomats and bouquets and press photographers.

Some days later we meet them again. We talk to them. They are impressed by everything.

"Albania isn't so different, after all, But they've done such a lot. It used to be as poverty-stricken here as in Anatolia."

Relations between Albania and Turkey are correct—even if one cannot speak of real friendship as long as Turkey is still bound to the United States.

The Albanians make speeches to their Turkish guests, claiming the memory of Kemal Atatürk. This was no transient gesture of politeness. Kemal Atatürk is respected in Albania.

When Enver Hoxha, in 1967, warned the Greek generals not to provoke Albania or Cyprus, he advised them to remember the hard blows which the "brave Turkish people led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had struck against Venizelos' hordes."

Since Moscow is accusing the Albanians of "petty bourgeois nationalism," it is perhaps important to point out that this is not a private assessment of Kemal Atatürk on the part of the Albanians, or of the national revolutionary movement in Turkey after Turkey's defeat in World War I and the victorious Turkish war of defense against the greed of the Entente powers.

At the Comintern's Third World Congress a resolution was adopted, at the twenty-fourth meeting on July 12, 1921,

concerning the "Theses on Tactics." In the tenth thesis, "International Collaboration for Action," we read among other things:

It is a duty of the communist parties in all countries whose troops are participating in the oppression and partition of Turkey to use all means of working for the revolt of these troops.

And at the meeting of the Moscow Soviet, on February 28 that year, Lenin had said:

The plunder to which the imperialist governments have exposed Turkey has met with such resistance that even the strongest of these imperialist powers has been forced to keep its hands off.

Venizelos' subservience to Lloyd George was to cost the Greek people dearly. They had to pay with their blood for the landing in Smyrna in May 1919. It was more than Great Britain's Greek legionaries could do to crush the Turkish national revolution. Kemal was fighting a just war.

Albania's existence as a nation, too, had been closely linked with this popular Turkish war of defense. When, at Lloyd George's instigation, Venizelos had taken up the struggle with the Kemalists in Turkey—using his own people as pawns in a game of chess—he had been promised Gjirokastra in Albania. The Italians' defeat in Albania in 1920, and Venizelos' defeat in Turkey (which also led to Venizelos' exile from Greece) saved southern Albania, and Albania's southern frontier remained what it had been when first drawn up in 1913. In their struggle for their existence as a nation after the Entente victory in World War I, the Albanian and Turkish peoples had, *de facto*, been allies. They had also had the full support of revolutionary workers and the anti-imperialist movement.

So Enver Hoxha's declaration of September 14, 1967, was neither transient, nor solely Albanian, in a limited sense.

And when the Turkish members of parliament said to us in the autumn of 1968, "It used to be as poverty-stricken here as it was in Anatolia," their remark was more than polite and generalized verbiage.

In Bulgaria the social struggle had long worn a religious guise. The feudal lords were Turks and Muslims, and the exploited peasants were Christians and Bulgarians. This made it possible for the great powers of Europe to play their game in the name of religion, and the national question was hidden behind religious slogans. In Albania it was a different state of affairs. There the long struggle for liberation from the Osman conquerors had forced the Church to take sides—or, to be more precise, to show its inability to take sides—and when the people left the Church, both exploiters and exploited became co-religionists. There was strong religious opposition in Albania, but the "Albanian question" could not be treated as a "religious question."

This was how the national movement in Albania came to have an idiosyncratic quality. It was directed against Turkish oppression, but it was not chauvinistically "anti-Turkish." Nor could the national movement in Albania be used by one or another great power under the guise of "religion" or "racial sympathy."

It is not true that a national movement is a progressive movement. Everything has to be judged in its historical context. By the turn of the century, the "national movements" in western Europe had become an expression of the reaction. The ruling classes in these countries were oppressing and exploiting other peoples. The conflict between France's ruling class and Germany's ruling class was no "national conflict." There, the bourgeoisie had played out its historically progressive role.

In the Balkans, on the other hand, the bourgeois-democratic revolution had not yet occurred; the "national movement" was progressive. The same slogans that in London, Paris, and Berlin were weapons in the hands of the greediest imperialists, had a progressive content in Sophia, Durres, and Sarajevo. In the Balkans the formation of nations was historically necessary and socially progressive. But the difference between developments in western and southeastern Europe also reflected the difference in economic development. The Balkan bourgeoisie was weak and undeveloped. On

their own they could not lead this highly necessary revolution, and the working class was not yet in a position to take over leadership. It was court cliques, great landowners, and reactionary prelates who set the tone, and the imperialist powers exploited this local chauvinism in their own interests.

In Albania the bourgeoisie was even less developed than in the other Balkan countries, and this is why the clan chieftains and feudal lords came to play so important a role there. But in Albania, as in the other Balkan countries, the social base of the national movements was the destitute peasantry.

The Albanian intellectuals, who in the mid-nineteenth century took up the national strivings, did so in the name of language. The first Albanian reader was published in 1844. This work was to secure the very existence of the Albanian language and was a response to a direct threat. Pan-slavism and pan-hellenism regarded Albania as nonexistent. Nor did the dominant power in the land, the Supreme Porte, recognize the Albanians' existence. It divided the country by religion. And each religion had its own alphabet. The struggle for the alphabet was the beginning of the struggle for national existence.

The first Albanian school in Albania was opened on March 7, 1887, in Korca. Its pupils were both Christians and Muslims, another demonstration that the national movement could not be turned into a religious movement.

Albania was divided into three religions, where representatives agreed with the Supreme Porte that the occupants of the country were not "Albanians," but "Greeks," "Muslims," and "Latins." To sing the praises of Skanderbeg, therefore, was not to sing the praises of "Christianity" fighting against "the infidel," but to sing of the Albanians' struggle against foreign conquerors.

Not only were the religious institutions generally uninterested in the national movement; they were directly involved in the struggle for the control of Albania by the neighboring states and great powers.

The Jesuits worked for Austria-Hungary, which was trying to get control of Albania. The Franciscans were working for

Italy, which was involved in a trade war against Austria-Hungary over Albania. The Greek Orthodox Church supported the Greek government's efforts to conquer southern Albania. The Muslim *mullahs* were closely allied to the Supreme Porte.

Czarist Russia and France were agreed that Serbia should get northern Albania, and the United States had already sent in its helpers. The Albanians had no church, no great power, and no neighboring country to turn to for support.

The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth were marked by a series of armed revolts and fighting, first with one power, then with another. The Supreme Porte became increasingly reluctant to recognize any Albanian nation. In 1902 the authorities closed the school at Korca and arrested its Albanian teachers. All education in the Albanian language was forbidden but the religious schools continued as before. Franciscans and Jesuits and Orthodox priests constituted no threat to the security of the state, as an Albanian teacher did.

The Albanian patriots replied with armed struggle. They also collaborated with the Young Turks. Sultan Abdul Hamid II was overthrown and the bourgeois revolution began to be victorious.

But the Young Turks would not grant the Albanian language its freedom either. Nor would they recognize Albania's autonomy. In July 1909, they demanded that the Muslim Albanians recognize that they were Osmons. Great revolts followed in 1910 and 1911. What had begun as an Albanian reader for children was growing into a war of national liberation, and the great feudal lords who had seemed to be leading the national movement were thrust aside by young men who wore the words "freedom or death" embroidered on their caps.

ALBANIA'S INDEPENDENCE AND PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM, OR BRANTING AND THE ALBANIAN TRIBES

On Thursday, November 28, 1912, the Albanian National Assembly met at Vlora. Delegates came from all over the country, and from among the Albanian partisans and from the Albanian emigrants abroad. Vlora was being held by Albanian partisans. At Durres the Turkish authorities tried to imprison the delegates. But the Turkish administration at Durres was on the verge of collapse. This was the eighth week of the Balkan War.

On October 8, Montenegro had declared war on Turkey. Three Montenegrin divisions had attacked Shkodra. They were held off by Albanian militia. On October 17, Turkey had declared war on Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece. The Turkish armies had been defeated and at the beginning of November the Third Serbian Army had invaded Albania. The Serbians took Tirana and were outside Durres and Elbasani. On November 19, the Montenegrans at Shkodra were reinforced by yet another Montenegrin division and a Serbian division, and besieged the town. From the south the Greeks advanced over Himara toward Vlora.

Albania was to be wiped out. The states of the Balkan League were going to divide up what was left of "European Turkey," and they had made no provision for Albania. Yet Albania already existed. During the spring, the uprising in Albania had grown enormously. In the summer great areas were liberated. On August 12, Skoplje fell, followed by Peshkopia, Fieri, Përmeti, and other cities. On August 18, 1912, the Turkish government in Istanbul announced that it accepted certain Albanian demands. The Albanians were to re-

ceive a series of economic, political, administrative, and cultural rights; but not formal autonomy.

This Albanian uprising had frightened the states of the Balkan League. They therefore hastened their preparations for war and held lengthy consultations with the representatives of Czarist Russia. The partition of Albania was decided on. Now it was to be implemented.

On November 3, Turkey sued for peace. The Turkish government applied to the great powers to mediate. Since the Austrian interests in the Balkans felt threatened by the Serbians' advance toward the Adriatic, Austria-Hungary mobilized. Wilhelm II of Germany declared to the heir to the Austrian throne, Franz Ferdinand, that there was to be no withdrawal on the Serbian question. If need be, a European war must be accepted. Czarist Russia did not feel it was sufficiently armed to fight a major war and was terrified by the Serbo-Bulgarian successes. The French government began to lean toward the view that this was the right moment for a great war. The French minister of war, Millerand (the first representative of "ministerial socialism," who, according to a Swedish encyclopedia, "showed great ability as an administrator") discussed the coming war with the Russian military plenipotentiary Colonel Ignatjev:

Millerand: Colonel! What do you consider to be the purpose of Austrian mobilization?

Ignatjev: Hard to say in advance, but without question the Austrian preparations against Russia are, for the time being, defensive in character.

Millerand: Good! That is to say, you would regard an occupation of Serbia as a direct warlike challenge to yourselves?

Ignatjev: I can't answer that question, but I know that we don't want to conjure up a European war and that we don't want to take any measures which can set Europe alight.

Millerand: Therefore you must leave Serbia to its fate. Naturally that's your business, but it should be known that it isn't our fault: we're ready, and this must be taken into account. Can't you at least explain to me how, in general, the Balkans are regarded in Russia?

Ignatjev: The Slav question is close to our hearts, but naturally we've learned from history that we must above all think of our own interests, which must not be sacrificed to abstract ideas.

Millerand: But surely, Colonel, you appreciate that this isn't a question of Albania or the Serbians or Durres, but of Austria's hegemony over the Balkan peninsula?

But for the Albanians it was a question of Albania. Their situation was desperate. The Balkan League wanted to expunge Albania; to join it was impossible. And that was why the elected delegates from all parts of Albania gathered to consult on what to do.

The Albanians did not wish to be expunged or suppressed. On November 28, 1912, the delegates to the Albanian National Assembly at Vlora decided unanimously to declare Albania a free, sovereign, and independent state. Ismail Qemal was elected president of the government. Ismail Qemal then went out on to the balcony and raised the banner of independent Albania: Gjergj Castriot Skanderbeg's banner.

Immediately after this decision to be independent, Qemal telegraphed the foreign ministries of the six great European powers, demanding that they recognize Albania as an independent state. He also declared Albania neutral in the Balkan War. The same telegram was sent to the foreign ministries of all the Balkan states.

But the great powers said nothing. The Balkan states' armies continued their advance into Albania; the defeated Turkish forces were regrouped to attack Vlora and put an end to the Albanian government and the attempt at independence. At all costs law and order were to be restored in the country.

The Balkan War was no hole-in-a-wall affair. It was a preliminary exercise for World War I. It had a double character. It was at once the Balkan peoples' war of liberation from Turkish oppression and a war fought by reactionary dynasties and bourgeois classes greedy for loot.

National liberation was distorted by feudal chauvinism and far-sighted imperialistic intrigues from Moscow, Vienna, Berlin, and Rome. And in this complicated game, the Al-

banians were forced to fight on two fronts. The same Albanians who in their war for their own liberation had been fighting the Turks, and who had captured Skoplje from them, were fighting in the Albanian militia at Shkodra. The militia, under Turkish commanders, was defending its own countryside against the Montenegrin and Serbian armies forcing their way into the country.

Albanian independence was a challenge to the chauvinists who ruled in Montenegro, Serbia, and Greece, and who had already agreed to divide Albania among themselves. Albania, representing as it did a further diminution of European Turkey, was also a challenge to the Turkish Empire. Thus the Albanian declaration of independence was a direct challenge to all the armies marching through the country. Independence had been the goal for which so many Albanian patriots had worked, written, fought, been imprisoned, and executed. Now—in this impossible situation—the only solution that was a political possibility was the declaration of independence.

Ismail Qemal was an able and experienced politician. The situation was desperate, but neither the assembly's decision nor Ismail Qemal's action was desperate. Both were calm and deliberate. That the great powers disagreed among themselves was no secret, even if the contents of their secret treaties were not known in detail. Russia's interests were incompatible with Austria-Hungary's; Austria-Hungary's interests were incompatible with Italy's. Ismail Qemal played on these incompatibilities in order to win independence for his own people. And his people were armed.

On November 29, 1912, the day after the national assembly at Vlora declared Albania independent, an article was published in *Social-Demokraten*, a Stockholm newspaper.*

According to the article, the threat of war had caused the International Socialist Bureau to summon an extraordinary

* The article was entitled "Impression from the Basle Conference," and it was by Hjalmar Branting, the first socialist member of the Swedish parliament and later first social-democratic prime minister. [Trans.]

world congress at Basle on November 24 and 25. It was the ninth and—as it was to turn out—last congress of the Second International. The only question on the agenda was the international situation and common action to prevent a war:

The final congress list included 518 delegates, a remarkable achievement for an improvised congress, such as in itself must impress all thinking people. . . . Against this background of a mass turn-out and general sympathy, what many had doubted in advance proved in fact to be possible: to carry out its task in absolute unity. . . . In confirmation of this, a *manifesto* was drawn up, the last details of which had been adjusted by a meeting of the bureau and the commission late on Sunday night. From the outset the atmosphere was one of great expectation. Jaures, who opened the congress, was received with a tremendous ovation, as was Adler and Keir Hardie, when each, on behalf of his own leading nation, exhorted [the congress] to stick together on [the resolutions that] had been presented. . . . Now the decisive moment had come. No voice was raised in protest, not any deviant opinion. Whatever else in the way of desiderata was naturally found to differ, it was nevertheless found that here *unity was everything!* At Greulich's word the entire assembly rose to its feet and a forest of arms was stretched out in collective expression of the International's peace appeal in a moment of extreme seriousness. "Now, party friends," we heard our seventy-one-year-old veteran's clear voice ring out, "we have bound ourselves by all means within our reach and capacity to prevent mass murder in Europe." And the Internationale's refrain rang powerfully through the hall, emphasizing this promise.

Reading this account, one would almost think this manifesto was an appeal for peace in general. Beautiful words about brotherhood and fraternity among peoples, and about peace. And this was how many of the delegates, too, saw the situation. Two years later, a number of those who had given "brilliant and inspiring speeches" at Basle were to lead their own organizations into the Great War; they had broken with all their own "brilliant and inspiring" words and become responsible for a whole generation of young European workers dying in the trenches.

But while they were standing there in Basle, their treason

was not wholly obvious. For the most part, they were under obligation to act according to their members' instructions. Only the Left within the International was suspicious of them, and asked questions about their behavior and policies. But this Left was called "extremist" and its questions were regarded as—at best—insolent and splintering, a sign of an enslavement to the letter rather than the spirit, as showing a lack of understanding of practical politics. In other cases their questions incited those they criticized to strike back with all their strength. But in 1912 not even the most consistent Left within the International dreamed that, in August 1914, these criticisms of opportunism would turn out to have shot far beyond the mark. Then the working class's great social-democratic leaders showed what they were really worth.

The manifesto adopted at Basle was thus not a vague peace appeal. It was a very clear piece of analysis. So to say that most responsible social-democratic representatives in top positions betrayed socialism in 1914 is not to use the word "betray" lightly, as a term of abuse. They were openly and directly contradicting the decisions they had themselves approved at Basle. They knew what they were doing.

Of the capitalists and imperialists, one can only say that they acted true to form. The right-wing social-democratic leaders, on the other hand, had carefully analyzed the great crime before they committed it. World history—as Hegel said—is the Last Judgment.

The Basle manifesto emphasized what the International had already declared at its congresses at Stuttgart and Copenhagen:

. . . If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working class and of its parliamentary representatives in the countries involved, supported by the consolidating activity of the International [Socialist] Bureau, to exert every effort to prevent the outbreak of war by means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the accentuation of the class struggle and of the general political situation. . . .

Note what the Basle manifesto says here. For among other things the right-wing social-democratic leaders were going to defend their actions afterwards by saying that in August 1914 the moment was not ripe to "make a revolution." But the Basle manifesto does not say "If you make war, we'll make a revolution." What it says, as a purely concrete instruction, is that "the economic and political crisis resulting from the war should be used to accelerate the abolition of capitalist class rule." It goes further; it warns the capitalist governments of the inevitable consequences of a new war. Historical experiences after two world wars have only lent added weight to the manifesto's words:

The governments must not forget that under present conditions in Europe and in the current mood of the working class, they cannot unleash a war without danger to themselves. They should remember that the Franco-German war was followed by the revolutionary uprising of the Commune, that the Russian-Japanese war set in motion revolutionary popular forces in Russia. . . .

The manifesto did not just analyze war in general; it made a concrete analysis of the world war to come and it set up specific tasks for the various countries' (Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, France, and England) social-democratic parties in the revolutionary struggle against war.

. . . However, if Tsarism should try again to act as the liberator of the Balkan nations, it will do so under this hypocritical pretext only to reconquer its hegemony in the Balkans by a bloody war. The Congress expects that the Russian, Finnish, and Polish urban and rural proletariat, whose strength is increasing, will destroy this web of lies, will offer resistance to all bellicose adventures of Tsarism, will combat every design of Tsarism whether upon Armenia or upon Constantinople, and will concentrate its whole force upon the resumption of the revolutionary struggle for liberation from Tsarism. . . .

. . . It is the duty of the social democratic parties of Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina to continue with all their power their effective work for the prevention of an attack upon Serbia by the Danubian monarchy. It is their task to continue as in the past to oppose the plan of robbing Serbia by

armed force of the results of the war, of transforming it into an Austrian colony, and of involving the peoples of Austria-Hungary proper and together with them all nations of Europe in the greatest dangers for the sake of dynastic interests. . . .

. . . But the most important task in the International's activities devolves upon the working class of Germany, France, and England. At this moment, it is the task of the workers of these countries to demand that their respective governments withhold all support to both Austria-Hungary and Russia, that they abstain from any intervention in the Balkan troubles and maintain absolute neutrality. A war between the three great leading civilized peoples because of the Serbo-Austrian dispute over a port would be criminal madness. The workers of Germany and France cannot concede that any obligation whatever to intervene in the Balkan conflicts exists because of secret treaties.

But should the military collapse of Turkey, on further development, lead to the downfall of the Ottoman rule in Asia Minor, then it would be the task of the socialists of England, France, and Germany to oppose with all their might the policy of conquest in Asia Minor, a policy which would inevitably lead directly to a world war. . . .

The overcoming of the antagonism between Germany on the one hand and France and England on the other would eliminate the greatest menace to universal peace, undermine the powerful position of Tsarism which exploits this antagonism, render an attack of Austria-Hungary upon Serbia impossible, and assure peace to the world. All the endeavors of the International, therefore, are to be directed primarily toward this goal. . . .

That was how the International analyzed the coming imperialist war of conquest and plunder in Europe. It was an internationalist and socialist analysis. But in assessing the behavior of the right-wing social-democratic leaders who—two years after unanimously adopting this manifesto and declaring that "It invites the workers of all countries to oppose the power of the international solidarity of the proletariat to capitalist imperialism"—sold themselves out to "their" bourgeoisies, betrayed the International, and led their members who had elected them to their deaths, it is not only the analysis one should consider. The Basle manifesto was extremely matter-of-fact.

In it, the parties were not only presented with the task of opposing the ruling class; they were given the task of opposing *their own* ruling class. Two years later, the German right-wing social-democrats were to declare that they were, of course, opposing the ruling class—in Russia. The French right-wing social democrats were to declare that they were opposing the ruling class—in Germany. But in the Basle manifesto these same leaders had “unanimously” recognized that their task was to oppose their *own* ruling classes. The Germans, the German; the Russians, the Russian; the French, the French. The manifesto leaves no room for doubt about that.

The manifesto also expressly obligated the “parliamentary representatives” to do their utmost. Later, many of the men who had “unanimously” adopted this resolution were to try to worm their way out of it, maintaining that it had not been they who had let down the cause, but the “people.” The people had been enthusiastic for war. The people had betrayed their own ideals. The parliamentary representatives had merely followed the people. In their defense, however, they forgot that as soon as they had been called to the colors the “people” were under military law. Only the parliamentarians and journalists were in a position to speak their minds freely. That was their job. It was for that they had been elected. That was what they were being paid for. And they had “bound themselves” to do so. There is no excuse for what the right-wing social-democratic leaders did in August 1914. But there is an explanation.

A few socialists, such as Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Eugene Debs, Dimitar Blagoev, the Serbian social-democrats, and others stood firmly by proletarian internationalism. But the majority of the Second International’s leaders turned out to be rotten. This rottenness, too, has an explanation.

There had been a long period of “peaceful conditions” in Europe. Wars were distant things. They were waged in the colonies and in the Balkans. Opportunism seemed to have paid dividends. Earlier Millerand was quoted. In that quotation he appears in his true colors, as an overt and cynical warmonger. A few years earlier his “intentions” had been

discussed within the International. It was at the Fifth Congress, in Paris in 1900.

Hjalmar Branting felt sympathetic toward the Millerand experiment. He explained this sympathy by saying that:

Socialists can have reasons for supporting, up to a point, an established order, when this brings them advantages which, by refusing it their support, they would lose. (*Social-Demokraten*, October 2, 1900)

At this congress the Belgian deputy and cooperative leader Edouard Anselée spoke. He said:

I was one of the first to congratulate Millerand on his initiative. I did this not merely because the Republic would otherwise have been in danger. No, I asked myself whether a socialist under these circumstances could be useful to the cause of socialism and the interests of the proletariat, and my answer was: yes. . . . Let us continue to honor the early fighters for the revolution who are no longer among us, but let us no less esteem those in our own days who are adopting methods of struggle that are more in keeping with real needs. . . . Millerand has been called a traitor because he joined a bourgeois government. Suppose that some day the owners of a great industrial enterprise feel incapable of carrying on by themselves and ask an intelligent socialist to take care of things, and thus to become their colleague before becoming their heir. Would anyone dare say to him: no, don’t accept, you would be betraying the working class? And would it be justified in holding him responsible for all the tricks and underhanded dealings of the capitalist system, as Millerand is now held responsible for every measure the government takes against the workers? . . . But it is precisely Millerand who has implemented the law concerning the normal working day, which creates the free time necessary for increasing the capacity of the proletariat to struggle against capitalism. (Stormy applause from the majority of the Congress.)

The words are there for us to read—as fresh as if they were written yesterday! But this opportunism, which has its social base among Anselée’s professional confreres and which offers the bait of petty advantages from collaboration, leads infallibly to August 4, 1914. In congratulating Millerand, Anselée was also congratulating his own electors on their imminent

death in the mass graves of Flanders. As we have seen, world history is the Last Judgment.

The analysis made by the Basle congress was the result of all the historical experiences which the Second International had gathered in the course of its struggle—the best side of its work. As an analysis, it has shown its worth, shown itself to be correct, not only in what concerns the progress of the war, but also in what concerns its results. World War I ended with a revolutionary storm sweeping over Russia, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Finland, and across Asia. The leaders might betray and unleash the war, but the analysis stood firm, and the treacherous leaders were unable to prevent the peoples' revolution.

In 1912, however, the victory of opportunism was not yet a foregone conclusion. Where the Balkan War and Albania were concerned, the International could give the social-democratic parties clear instructions for their work.

The Congress of Basle analyzed the background of the Balkan War and explained its double nature. Therefore it gave the social-democratic parties in the Balkan countries direct instructions:

The social-democratic parties of the Balkan peninsula are faced with a difficult task. By systematically frustrating all reforms, the great European powers have contributed to the creation in Turkey of intolerable economic, national, and political conditions that are bound to lead to revolt and war. In the face of attempts to capitalize on these conditions on behalf of the monarchies and the bourgeoisie, the Balkan social-democratic parties have heroically raised the demand for a democratic federation. The congress calls on them to maintain their exemplary position, and expects social-democracy after the war to do its utmost to prevent the outcome of the Balkan War, which has taken such a terrible toll to achieve, from being exploited by the Balkan monarchies, the militarists, and the conquest-bent bourgeoisies for their own purposes. The congress demands in particular that Balkan socialists resist not merely a reactivation of the old enmity between Serbia, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Greece, but also any use of force against the Balkan peoples who are currently in the other war camp—i.e., the Turks and the Albanians. The socialists of the

Balkan countries have the duty to combat any attack on the rights of these peoples, and to proclaim the fraternal links between all Balkan peoples, including Albanians, Turks, and Rumanians, in the face of rampant national chauvinism.

When one reads Hjalmar Branting's report on the negotiations at the Congress of Basle, it seems as if these words expressed no more than an eloquent wish for peace in the midst of a monstrous war:

Sasakoff's descriptions of the horrors in the Balkans, for instance, were gripping; they alone could have filled a peace sermon. After all, he came from there; he had seen the mobilization, how people had been dragged away from home and family within twenty-four hours; he described how communications have been cut off between those who had been sent away and those who remained at home; no field post allows any news to get through, people do not know whether their husbands or sons are alive or have already been cut down by bullets and tribulations. As for care of the sick and wounded, it is almost ironical even to speak of any, so little can be done against the rising sea of cries and misery created in a few hours by modern warfare. There, thousands are being coldly sacrificed and sent to certain death in one attack; in the darkness men fire on their comrades, and weeks pass before those who, though wounded, survive the horrors of the battlefield receive any proper care in a hospital. (*Social-Demokraten*, November 29, 1912)

Certainly Branting had every sympathy with his comrade from the Balkans who had described the realities of war; but when he comes to his account of the congress's decisions, he abandons the concrete words of the manifesto for general talk about the "unifying watchword" which gives strength:

When the manifesto was in the commission and the bureau decided by means of binding exhortations to all concerned to stake the utmost possible, that each according to his own conditions should do *everything* in his power to stop the mass murder from spreading from the Balkans across Europe, everyone felt that it was here, and not in certain disputable formulas, lay the unifying watchword which could alone give strength. (*Social-Demokraten*, November 30, 1912)

Branting's underestimation of the importance of these "disputable" formulas led him to give a superficial rendering of the actual contents of the manifesto he had voted for:

Social-democracy has always asserted clearly that behind the Balkan crisis lies a rising of oppressed classes and peoples which, seeking their own freedom, have broken through the obstacles to culture and progress. We have pointed to the *great powers of Europe* as responsible for strangling the promised reforms and for the solution to problems not taking the peaceful paths demanded and made possible by our epoch. (*Social-Demokraten*, December 4, 1912)

Branting's analysis of the opposing forces was not a socialist analysis; he had sunk to a liberal point of view. And that was why, once he had abandoned Marxism, it was beyond him either to repeat the correct analysis of the concrete conflicts between the great powers expressed in the manifesto, or the class analysis of the Balkan conflicts which lay behind the manifesto's exhortation to the Balkan social-democratic parties. This was why Hjalmar Branting could write:

... that for local disputes in the Balkans of the most subordinate kind it has been seriously questioned how the most powerful peoples in Europe could send against each other their million-strong armies and their fleets of dreadnoughts, how the best forces of the most civilized countries could be laid waste on account of differing opinions about some remote Serbian harbor or the degree of self-government of Albanian tribes! (*Social-Demokraten*, December 12, 1912)

This opportunism, this flat and "unifying" will to peace to which Branting gave expression, is typical of the great social-democratic parties' leadership during World War I. It enabled them to abandon the Basle manifesto, explode the International, and go over to the bourgeois camp.

In the debate in the Stockholm Workers' Commune on March 12, 1916, over Erik Heden's demand that an extra congress be summoned in order to mobilize the working class for a struggle against the war, Branting expressed, clearly and

simply, the Second International's leading party bureaucrats' view of themselves:

In the last resort, even if a congress assembles and makes decisions, it will be a few representatives who will have to assess the real situation of the hour and take responsibility for what they advise [the congress to do]. So what use, in the name of all that is reasonable, can a congress with its generalized phraseology be?

After a three-hour debate, Branting was outvoted, losing 283 to 303. But after all—as he himself said—it was of no consequence.

Two years after Hjalmar Branting had voted for the Basle manifesto and then misinterpreted it to the Swedish workers, he wrote an article entitled "Hail Belgium!" In it there is no trace of the Basle manifesto's correct analysis—confirmed by history—of the imperialist conflicts. Now Branting—along with, under various banners and in various fatherlands, almost all the leading "representatives" within the International—had turned into bourgeois ideologists. Yet the peculiar thing about Hjalmar Branting's article is that—together with what Benito Mussolini, who had just been excluded from the Italian socialist party and wrote at the same time about the "rape of Belgium," had written—it constitutes the most high-sounding piece of Entente propaganda anyone from the Second International contrived to produce in any of the neutral countries:

But then came the crime against international law and Belgium. For us Swedes, who wish to preserve our neutrality to the utmost, it seemed like a blow at our own hearts. It changed the whole mood among our people, and it seemed as if even the voices in the pro-German section of our press had lost their self-assured tone. And the harder the [Germans'] behavior became, the more their march [through Belgium] assumed the character of an invasion by a ravaging conqueror, the stronger grew the sympathy of Swedish hearts for this brave little people who stood up boldly for right and freedom, without counting the numbers

of a crushingly superior [force]... So: Hail Belgium! And my warmest wish as a Swede must be this: if ever a day comes when against all our hopes and despite the peace that we have tried to prepare among peoples, our neutral country is threatened by violence, then may we unanimously follow Belgium's brilliant example, so sure of victory even in the midst of apparent annihilation! (*Social-Demokraten*, December 22, 1914)

From opportunism and treachery back to the Balkans and the "admirable attitude" of the socialists of 1912! In its acclamation of the social-democratic parties of the Balkans, the manifesto was not dealing in empty words. National chauvinism and religious fanaticism had been whipped up into a warlike frenzy by the ruling classes and dynasties. The propaganda mills had begun to grind, as a few years later they were to grind on behalf of Belgium.

But at the outbreak of that war, Bulgaria's Social-Democratic Workers' Party protested against the declaration. Under the leadership of Dimitar Blagoev, the party's central committee met and sent a greeting to the congress of the International in Basle:

We protest in the strongest terms against this war, so sanguinary and destructive for the people of the Balkans, which the ruling classes and dynasties have begun for territorial conquest and in order to satisfy capitalist and monarchic interests. . . . The conscious Bulgarian proletariat demands an immediate end to the war, the cancellation of the state of siege, and the restitution of political liberties.

It was war, war hysteria, and state of emergency. The International was right to regard the party's attitude as "admirable." That is the way class-conscious socialists act in difficult times. But if the Balkan socialists were admirable, it was not because they stood so firmly by their principles; it was because they had already analyzed in principle the Balkan problems. And it is their analysis that is mirrored in the manifesto's words and that forms the basis of the demands it places on the Balkan social-democrats. Here, truly, it was not a question of "disputable questions . . . of the

most subordinate nature . . . various opinions about . . . the degree of Albanian self-government," as Hjalmar Branting wrote.

At the end of December 1909, thirty-two delegates from Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, and Montenegro had met in Belgrade for the First Social-Democratic Balkan Conference. The initiative had been taken by the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (the "narrow-minded"), and its opinions had set their stamp on the conference. (Among the delegates in Belgrade were the young trade union leader and newly elected member of the Bulgarian party's central committee, Georgi Dimitrov.)

The conference analyzed the Balkan policies of the great capitalist powers. It was found that they were aiming at annexation and at the political and economic subjugation of the Balkan countries. Criticism was raised against the representatives of social-democratic parties in the great powers who—like Viktor Adler—had taken the side of their own bourgeoisies by denying the Balkan peoples the right to national self-determination. The countries' own bourgeoisies' policies were analyzed and a demand was made for a federative Balkan republic.

[Not only did] the First Social-Democratic Balkan Conference demonstrate the economic and political reasons for the incessant national conflicts in the Balkans; nor did it merely expose the monarchistic bourgeoisie's selfish and nationalistic policy in the Balkan peninsula, where this bourgeoisie was all the time fanning the flames of national conflicts; it also emphasized that the only social force capable of uniting the nations of the Balkans in action was the proletariat, by its own struggle.

After a long and many-sided discussion, the social-democrats from the ten Balkan and South Slavonic nations were able to adopt the conference's resolution, unanimously and with an ovation. In this resolution the Balkan bourgeoisie's chauvinism surfaced and was condemned as being the immediate cause of national hostility in the Balkan peninsula. . . . In this resolution the proletariat took upon itself the great task of working for the unity of the Balkan nations, using the class struggle as its only

means. In this way the First Social-Democratic Balkan Conference laid the foundations for the establishment of close and friendly relations among the social-democratic parties and organizations in the Balkan peninsula. (*Rabonicheski Vestnik*, November 11, 1911)

The social-democrats in the Balkan peninsula based their policy on a lucid assessment of capitalist development:

Capitalism . . . with iron necessity is forcing the great powers of Europe into a colonial and imperialist policy. (Dimitar Blagoev, *Novo Vreme*, April 1912)

On the eve of the war that was on the way, Dimitar Blagoev explained social-democratic policy:

We social-democrats are in favor of the liberation of all oppressed peoples; we are also for the liberation of the small peoples. We must declare that we are also for the union of the Balkan peoples; but we have quite another view of the liberation of the Macedonian people as a national union. . . . We regard this as possible by means of a federative Balkan republic. It is known that we are against the war. . . . When we today oppose the bourgeois parties and their fellow-travelers' criminal agitation, we also turn against those parties that are enemies of the national union of the Balkan peoples. (*Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, September 11, 1912)

This political line did not mean that the Balkan social-democrats were talking about peace and peoples in general. Against this war and in favor of the nations' development; against chauvinism and in favor of national liberation; against the bourgeoisie's hatred of the people and in favor of friendship and cooperation, even with the Turkish people; against the national "civil peace" and national "understanding," and in favor of proletarian internationalism, class war, and real national liberation within the framework of a federative Balkan republic.

On October 18, 1912, all sections of the International Socialist Bureau sent out an appeal from the socialists of Turkey and the Balkans:

To the working people of the Balkans and Asia Minor!
To the Workers' International!

To public opinion!

The war is at our doors. By the time these lines are published, war is probably already a fact. But we, socialists from the Balkans and the Near East who are directly affected by the war, we are not letting ourselves be swept up by the chauvinist tide.

The manifesto analyzed the policies of the great powers in the Balkans and Asia Minor. (The victorious Entente tried to realize this partition after World War I, until they were defeated by Kemal Atatürk's Turkish war of liberation.) The appeal pointed out the serious consequences of a Turkish victory in the Balkan War and of a victory for the chauvinist and monarchic groups in the Balkans. It also pointed out that the chauvinists were misusing legitimate national demands. The socialists were not against national union, but bourgeois nationalism was not capable of creating a real and lasting national union. This nationalism was a chauvinism that could only lead to a new national oppression. Against the Turkish oppression, against chauvinism, the war, and the reaction:

We reply by emphasizing the absolute necessity—already pointed out by the First Social-Democratic Balkan Conference in Belgrade in 1909—of a close union, in the most democratic form, of all the peoples of the Balkans and Near East, without respect to race or religion.

Outside of this federation of the peoples of Eastern Europe, no lasting national union is possible. There is no swift economic and social development, for they will be incessantly threatened by an ever recurrent local reaction and by foreign domination.

The appeal demanded a Democratic Balkan Federation; it demanded land reform and thoroughgoing democratic reforms:

For this program we demand support, not only from the Balkan proletariat, but also from international socialism. We, the socialists of the Balkans and the Near East, are highly aware of the double responsibility that rests on us, to the world proletariat and to ourselves.

Now, in meeting head-on the warlike torrent unleashed by the governments and the chauvinist press, and in fighting against

prejudices inculcated by a false education, which serves to facilitate the struggle among nations and to confirm class dominance, we fulfill—without yielding—the duty of international solidarity. In reality we are only an advance guard. For the Balkan War bears within it a direct danger to general peace. . . . For weeks and months we have been fighting against the war. But it is above all at this moment that we make our strongest protest. We express with all our strength our firm intent to support the world proletariat's struggle against war, against militarism, against capitalist exploitation, for the liberation of classes and nations, in a word, for peace. *Down with the war!*

Long live the international solidarity of the peoples! (The Socialists of the Balkans and Turkey)

A few days later Lenin wrote about the line taken by the Balkan socialists:

The conscious workers in the Balkan countries were the first who gave the word for a consistent democratic solution to the national questions in the Balkans. The word is: a Federative Balkan Republic. (*Pravda*, November 22, 1912)

It was this line that the International in Basle approved and supported:

. . . insufferable economic, national, and political conditions, which must necessarily lead to revolt and war. Against these conditions' exploitation in the interest of royal houses and the bourgeoisie, the Balkan countries' social-democratic parties have heroically demanded a democratic federation. The congress exhorts them to persist in their admirable attitude.

Therefore, when the congress demanded that the Balkan social-democratic parties protect the rights of the Albanian people, its political attitude was consistent. It was this consistent attitude that Hjalmar Branting falsified for the Swedish working class by writing about "local disputes . . . of the most subordinate kind . . . various opinions about . . . the degree of the Albanian tribes' self-determination."

In his instructions to the Bolshevik deputies in the Russian Duma, Lenin wrote:

The word about the Federative Balkan Republic must also be preached by the Russian deputies. Against Slav-Turkish enmity! In favor of the freedom and equality of all the Balkan peoples!

And Lenin pointed out that the Bolshevik deputies in the Duma must clarify the Basle manifesto: "War on the war! Against all intervention! For peace! This is the workers' demand!"

To stand firmly by these demands meant, when push came to shove, being arrested, tried, imprisoned. The really Bolshevik deputies stood firm. And this turned out to be a victory. The "prudent" German social-democratic members of parliament who, on August 4, 1914, bowed to developments and voted for the war, alleging that in this way they were preserving the party to serve the working class—they led their electors to death and defeat. But the Bolshevik deputies transformed their own imprisonment into a great political victory. They put politics first and thus forced the state to show that national unity was a myth; and they unmasked the war's class character to the Russian and international working class.

The words of the Basle manifesto were no empty words. What the manifesto obligated the parliamentarians to was a firm adherence to principles in a situation where a tactical maneuver would be a betrayal of the interests of the people.

Behind the words of the Basle manifesto lay a very serious discussion of basic political issues. But the manifesto had not mentioned the Albanians only in passing; it was on the side of Albanian independence and analyzed the dangers threatening it, and in accordance with this analysis imposed concrete tasks on the social-democratic parties of Italy and Austria-Hungary:

Particular attention should be paid to the Albanian question, both by the Austro-Hungarian Social-Democratic Party and by Italy's socialists. The congress recognizes the Albanian peoples' right to autonomy. But it protests against Albania, under the guise of autocracy, falling a victim to Austro-Hungarian and Ital-

ian lust for domination. In this the congress sees not only a danger to Albania itself, but also a threat to peace between Austria-Hungary and Italy. Only as an independent link in a democratic Balkan federation can Albania lead an independent life of its own. The congress therefore exhorts the social-democrats of Austria-Hungary and Italy to oppose any attempt by their governments to draw Albania into their sphere of influence, and to continue with their efforts to strengthen the peaceful relations between Austria-Hungary and Italy.

From Vlora, Ismail Qemal, on behalf of the Albanian national assembly, had telegraphed to the great powers that Albania was an independent and—in the Balkan War—neutral state. And still the foreign armies were forcing their way into the country; and still the Turkish commanders and their troops were in the country; and still no word came from the great powers.

But the supreme organ of the international working class, the congress of the International, had instructed the parties to protect the rights of Albania. In Austria-Hungary and Italy the organized and conscious part of the working class placed itself in the way of their governments' plans; and all around the Balkans conscious socialists, despite all the warmongering, chauvinism, and state of siege, sided with Albania. In *Rabotnicheski Vesnik*, George Dimitrov wrote:

The cruel and uninhibited "war of liberation" now going on has covered the battlefield with hundreds of thousands of dead and has transformed a number of rich and prosperous districts in Thrace, Macedonia, Old Serbia, and Albania into ashes and ruins and has annihilated normal economic and political life in the Balkan countries. But by the coming *partition* of the "liberated" countries and peoples, the war now threatens to . . . drown the Balkan countries in their own blood and set fire to the whole of Europe.

Yet the International was eroded and opportunism was strong. Not many days after the Basle manifesto, the right-wing social-democrats were assuring "their" governments of their support for the war then being planned. In the German Reichstag, Eduard David stood up and, in the name of the

German social-democratic fraction, spoke in support of the imperial government's foreign policy, maintaining that the Triple Alliance was a factor for peace.

This alliance, which was renewed on December 6, 1912, was to be in force until July 8, 1920. In its seventh article we read:

If, even so, it should happen that in the course of events the maintenance of the status quo in the Balkan peninsula or on the Ottoman coast and in the islands of the Adriatic and Aegean seas becomes impossible and that—either as a result of the action of a third power or in some other way—Austria-Hungary or Italy are obliged for their part to change the status quo by a temporary or permanent occupation, then this occupation shall only take place after previous agreement between the two powers, and this shall rest on the basic principle of mutual compensation for all territorial or other advantages that each might obtain, over and above the present status quo, and shall satisfy both parties' interests and rightful demands.

This was what this "factor for peace" looked like; it is strikingly like all other similar factors of peace, and on December 9, 1912, the *Leipziger Volkzeitung* warned against the consequences of this right-wing social-democratic policy:

For the socialist side to base itself on the Triple Alliance, as Comrade David did in the state debate last Tuesday, is thus a complete impossibility and will finally lead to the International being torn asunder. . . . The bourgeois press . . . drew from it [Eduard David's speech]—to its capitalist consciousness—the very calming conclusion that [Germany] can calmly go to war and the German working class won't make any move.

Albanian independence was not proclaimed in some remote corner of Europe. Nor was it proclaimed in a year like any other year.

BUT WHICH INDEPENDENCE?

At the time of the Balkan War, European politics was dominated by six "powers": Italy, Germany, and Austria-Hungary in the Triple Alliance, and Britain, France, and Russia in the Entente. Each had various smaller states under it, organized in various degrees of dependency. On the eve of the Balkan War these various powers had opposing interests: Russia supported the Balkan League against Turkey. Britain and France had approved the secret paragraphs in the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement of March 13, 1912, and the Parisian bourse had given Bulgaria a loan. Germany and Austria-Hungary were supporting Turkey—or, to be more exact, they wanted Turkey for themselves as the spoils of war. Italy had just taken Tripoli from Turkey—the Vatican, through the Banco di Roma, had major investments there.

Officially, and as far as the public was concerned, the "powers" presented themselves as preservers of a peace that was to be secured by all of Europe, and of the balance of power. In reality, all of them were preparing for war—not any war, but this particular war. But the war in the Balkans came to threaten their interests. A union of temporary contradictions occurred. Turkey's collapse came too swiftly for Russia, which had still not recovered from its defeat by Japan or from the 1905 revolution. Russia was worried that the Bulgarian army might reach Constantinople—Constantinople belonged to Russia's part of the spoils and a Bulgarian occupation might lead to complications and to one or another of the other powers gaining a foothold on the important straits.

Britain found it hard to intervene in a war that was

directly aimed against Turkey. The situation in India was worrying, and a war with Turkey could lead to revolts in India, since millions of Indians looked to the caliph as their supreme religious ruler. If Britain were to go to war, it needed some other pretext. (A few years later Belgium was to give it a pretext that did not directly threaten the British Empire in India.)

Germany was supporting Austria-Hungary; but it was still unprepared for war and after consultations with Britain, tried to pressure Austria not to unleash a world war.

Two powers were directly interested in an immediate world war. Conrad von Hötzendorf, chief of the Austrian general staff, told the heir to the Austrian throne that the war machine was ready. Admittedly, the chances were not as good as they had been in 1909, but it was still not too late to be victorious. France, too, was ready for war. Paris showed its impatience at Russian hesitation. In connection with the new loans, France demanded that Russia improve its war preparations.

In this situation, Albania became the hub around which the entire question of war and peace came to revolve. In Albania all the various interests clashed. Sir Edward Grey, then British minister for foreign affairs, wrote later:

Austria felt strongly that if Albania ceased to be Turkish territory, it should not become part of Serbia. Encouraged by victory, Serbia could easily move toward an unavoidable conflict with Austria. In such an event Russia might feel compelled to come to Serbia's aid, and this could lead to a European war. In order to guard against this danger and prevent a catastrophe, I proposed a conference between the Powers. . . .

At the initiative of Sir Edward Grey, the ambassadors of all the powers met in London. Three of the powers had direct interests in the "Albanian question." Russia wanted to divide up Albania between the states of the Balkan League so that Serbia would acquire a harbor on the Adriatic coast. Austria-Hungary and Italy were both interested in grabbing Albania—and therefore, faced with this Russian threat, agreed to demand a large and independent Albania. At their first meeting

on December 17, 1912, the ambassadors were able to reach a compromise: Albania was to be autonomous.

Just what this implied is hard to say. Russia preferred to interpret it as meaning that Albania should become "an autonomous province under the sultan's sovereignty." This corresponded to the Serbian demands—for if Albania was a province under the sultan's *sovereignty*, then the question of Albania's partition could be raised again. But Poincaré said that while "a Turkish sovereignty over Albania could give rise to a lot of resistance, suzerainty was not enough." And so the conference decided. Albania became an autonomous state under the control of the powers and the sultan's suzerainty.

To understand this, one must know what suzerainty is. It is a feudal relationship, an overlordship, the rights owned by a sovereign state's ruler over a semi-sovereign state. In December 1912, this, from the powers' point of view, was a suitable compromise, since the sultan was not "ruler of a sovereign state"—Turkey being obviously in a state of dissolution. And this was why, by introducing the concept of suzerainty, it was possible to postpone the solution of the "Albanian question" for the time being and place the country under the joint control of the powers. Accordingly, Serbia was to withdraw its troops from Albania. If this did not take place, Austria-Hungary was to intervene.

In the spring of 1913, the powers' interpretation of the implications of autonomy changed. From May 1913 on, Russia became the most impassioned advocate of suzerainty. It demanded respect for the decision of December 17, 1912, and its representatives waxed eloquent over the sultan's rights as feudal overlord over Albania. For on May 8, 1913, Austria-Hungary and Italy, who in December 1912 had been given the task of working out a project for the organization of the Albanian state, presented their proposal.

Its first paragraph defined Albania as "autonomous under the sultan's suzerainty." But the second paragraph made this suzerainty purely nominal. In the course of the debate, Austria-Hungary's ambassador, Mensdorff, pointed out that the demands by the powers for a neutralized Albania did not

accord with suzerainty. A "neutral vassal state" is a logical impossibility. Italy immediately supported Mensdorff's point of view and proposed that both the first two paragraphs be deleted.

Russia, which had just fought for the sultan's sovereignty, now fought just as urgently for his suzerainty. There was nothing remarkable about this. The sultan was shortly to be Russia's enemy, and on May 19, 1913, the French ambassador to Turkey, Bompard, reported to his government that the Russian ambassador had told him that:

To its neighbors Turkey is an inheritance about to fall due. . . .
Let Albania retain a Turkish label. In this way all the measures Serbia can take when the possibilities arise will have been made possible juridically.

Just as Russia was hypocritically troubling itself over the sultan's rights, Austria-Hungary and Italy were hypocritically troubling themselves about Albanian independence. Both pieces of playacting were nothing but verbiage disguising a lust for conquest.

The French thought it impossible to gain the Russian goals, and therefore, together with the British, were able to formulate a compromise: Albania was to become an independent state, but its independence was to be under the joint control of the powers. At the meeting on May 20, 1913, the Russian ambassador Benckendorf himself backed this point of view, and the powers reached their compromise.

Because of the pressure they brought to bear, a clause was introduced in paragraph three of the treaty of peace between the powers warring in the Balkans to the effect that both Turkey and the Balkan states "leave to the powers the task of fixing Albania's boundaries and any other question touching Albania."

Now the conflict was revived on a new plane. The Triple Alliance wanted the immediate appointment of an Albanian prince ("Albanian" in the sense of ruling over Albania, not in the sense of "stemming from Albania"); Russia and France wanted an International Control Commission and a provisional

state organization. Their view carried the day: Albania was to be under the control of the powers, who were to choose a prince; an International Control Commission was to govern the country, taking charge of administration and budget. This International Control Commission was to consist of seven members, one from each state plus an Albanian. Internal security was to be maintained by a gendarmerie organized by Swedish officers. (When Sweden declined, the honor went to the Netherlands.)

On July 29, 1913, it was decided that:

1. Albania constitutes an autonomous, sovereign, and hereditary monarchy . . . guaranteed by the six Powers.
2. All sovereign relations between Turkey and Albania are abolished.
3. Albania is neutralized; its neutrality is guaranteed by the Powers.

The question of Albania's political frontiers was a complicated one. Serbia and Montenegro wanted to have northern Albania; Greece wanted to have southern Albania. Russia supported them. If Albania was to be independent, at least it should be as small as possible. Austria-Hungary opposed the Serbian demands. Italy wanted to move the northern frontier of Greece as far south as possible and therefore supported Austria-Hungary in the question of the northern frontiers, while Austria-Hungary supported Italy in the question of the southern ones.

The powers were able to reach a compromise. Serbia got Kossova—which lay in the interior. Half of Albania was to lie outside Albania's frontiers, including such important towns as Prizren, Jakova, Peja, Prishtina, Dibra, Tetova, and Gostivar.

The question of an Albanian government remained. Ismail Qemal had abolished feudal conditions, and wished to establish a "Western" system and a bourgeois-capitalist government. This aroused the beys' (the feudal landlords') displeasure. France and Russia supported the beys' counter-government, which, as a *quid pro quo*, was to accept the new

frontiers. Austria-Hungary and Italy to some extent supported Ismail Qemal's government, which as a *quid pro quo* was to accept economic concessions and give Austria-Hungary and Italy political privileges in Albania.

On January 22, 1914, the International Control Commission decided to chase out Ismail Qemal and eliminate the Vlorë government and the National Assembly. A new compromise was reached. A Prussian major, the prince of Wied, was appointed prince of Albania, under the title of Vilhelm I, Mpret of Albania (*mpret* means emperor). On behalf of the Albanian people, the beys' representative, Esad Pascha Top-tani, was to travel to Germany and offer the crown of Albania to this Prussian major.

The powers had gotten their independent Albania. The new ruler's regime was supported by the International Control Commission and the great landowners. On March 7, 1914, Vilhelm I, Mpret of Albania, arrived in the capital of his realm, Durres.

And there, for the moment, we can leave him. I have not described these diplomatic intrigues of 1912 and 1913 because they are amusing, but because they unambiguously indicate the way in which the "powers" in the imperialist epoch are in the habit of solving questions of "independence." Albania was the first country—but not the last—to have an International Control Commission imposed upon it. This is why it is so instructive to observe how the game was played.

However, then—as later—independence was a question for the Albania people themselves to resolve.

ABOUT HIGHER VALUES

"A scrap of paper," the German chancellor of state, Bethmann Hollweg, said to Sir Edward Goschen on August 4, 1914. He was talking about the guarantee of Belgium's neutrality.

It became famous; it became infamous; it was regarded as a peculiarly German view of treaties. Yet it is no more peculiarly German than are genocide and concentration camps. It is normal and imperialistic. Look at Albania's neutrality: on September 3, 1914, Vilhelm I had been obliged to bid his faithful people adieu, climb aboard an Italian warship in Durres, and flee home to Prussia. He allowed it to be known that he "considered it best to travel westwards for a while."

And without a doubt he was right. His faithful people had revolted and he had no country to govern. Austria-Hungary had dropped him in a hurry and contacted the rebels.

The world war had begun. But, on August 3, Italy had declared itself neutral. That same day the Italian minister for foreign affairs had informed the German government that Italy "would look into the possibility of coming to the aid of its allies" if properly compensated for so doing.

This was the beginning of negotiations about Albania. Germany proposed that Italy should compensate itself in Africa. The Entente, on the other hand, immediately promised Vlora (and a great deal else) to Italy.

The great German successes in Belgium inclined the Italian government to support the Triple Alliance. But then came the Battle of the Marne, and the Italian government turned to the Entente and suggested it raise the stakes.

Meanwhile, the Entente had defined its war aims. Among much else—such as the expansion of Belgium at the expense of Germany—these included giving northern Albania to Serbia, southern Albania to Greece, and Vlora to Italy. If they all behaved themselves.

To improve its initial position, Italy occupied Vlora on October 19, 1914, and the Greeks marched into southern Albania. (Albania, Greece, and Italy, at this point, were all neutral.)

On December 7, the Russian, British, and French ministers in Athens informed the Greek government that they were willing to offer Greece the southern part of Albania with the exception of Vlora, providing Greece came into the war on the side of the Entente.

The Italian government then informed the German government of the Entente's offer, proposing to Italy's allies in the Triple Alliance that they increase their offer to prevent Italy from going to war against its allies, a suggestion which received the Pope's lively support—it was to the Vatican's interest that Italy and Austria-Hungary remain allies. In February 1915, the Italian ambassador to London, the Marquess Imperiali, suggested that negotiations be reopened. These were conducted by Sir Edward Grey for Britain, Ambassador Paul Cambon for France, Ambassador Benckendorf for Russia, and the Marquess Imperiali for Italy. It took them six weeks to fix the details of the future territorial partition of Albania.

At the same time, negotiations were going on in Vienna. On March 8, 1915, it had been decided that Italy should be allowed to compensate itself. The only question was whether this should be at once, or after the war was over.

On April 26, 1915, the London negotiations were concluded. Italy was to come into the war "as soon as possible and at all events not later than one month after the signing of this document by the negotiatory powers." Among those who "with their own hands had signed and with their seals confirmed" the agreement were the diplomats who, twenty-

one month earlier, had "with their own hands signed and with their seals confirmed" Albania's sovereignty and permanent neutrality.

Italy was promised £50,000,000 sterling and a series of territorial conquests:

5. Remark 2 . . . The port of Durrës could be ceded to an independent Mohammedan Albanian State.

6. Italy gains full ownership rights over Vlora and the island of Sazan, as well as a sufficiently large territory that can be secured militarily, approximately between the Vijosa River to the north and east and as far as the border of the Himara district to the south.

7. Should a smaller, independent, neutral state be established in Albania, Italy, which . . . gains the Bay of Vlora, may not raise any objections should France, Great Britain, and Russia eventually wish to partition Albania's northern and southern border territories among Montenegro, Serbia, and Greece. . . . Italy retains the right to control the foreign policy of "Albania"; Italy fully agrees that Albania is to be ceded territory sufficiently large to enable it to link up its borders west of the Sea of Okhrida with the borders of Greece and Serbia. . . .

On May 3, 1915, Italy annulled the Triple Alliance. On May 9, the Triple Alliance raised its offer. Vlora was ceded to Italy, Austria-Hungary declared itself wholly uninterested in Albania and gave Italy a free hand there, provided Italy maintained its nonbelligerent status. A number of members of the Italian parliament were against the war, and it might seem that the Entente had lost the game at the very last moment.

But then the Entente played a strong card. At an early stage in the war it had bribed Benito Mussolini, a leading socialist, and helped him to build up a political apparatus. Now he was allowed to attack the parliament. This demonstration of strength was successful; the parliamentarians got cold feet and voted through the war credits on May 20. On May 23, Italy entered the war.

In Sweden, Hjalmar Branting made a speech about the crime against Belgium and praised Sir Edward Grey. In Switzerland, Lenin wrote:

The favorite plea of the social-chauvinist triple (now quadruple) entente . . . is the example of Belgium. But this example goes against them. The German imperialists shamelessly violated the neutrality of Belgium, as belligerent states have done always and everywhere, trampling upon *all* treaties and obligations if necessary. Let us suppose that all the states interested in the observation of international treaties declared war on Germany with the demand for the liberation and indemnification of Belgium. In such a case, the sympathies of Socialists would, of course, be on the side of Germany's enemies. But the whole point is that the "triple (and quadruple) entente" is waging war *not* over Belgium: this is perfectly well known, and only hypocrites conceal this. England is grabbing Germany's colonies and Turkey; Russia is grabbing Galicia and Turkey; France wants Alsace Lorraine and even the left bank of the Rhine; a treaty has been concluded with Italy for the division of the spoils (Albania, Asia Minor). . . . How does "defense of the fatherland" come in here?

The Serbian army marched into Albania. Italy landed thirty thousand men in Albania. Austria-Hungary marched into Albania. French troops marched into Albania, and the war continued on the still neutral soil of Albania until October 1918.

When, at the end of 1915, Lenin wanted to explain the difference between just and unjust wars, between defense of the fatherland and chauvinism, he wrote, among other things: "For example, if tomorrow Morocco were to declare war on France, India on England, Persia or China on Russia, Turkey on Germany or Russia, Albania on Austria and Italy, and so forth, those would be 'just,' defensive wars. . . ."

In Sweden, Hjalmar Branting made a furious attack on the feminist writer Ellen Key because she questioned the Entente's war propaganda and wasn't one-sidedly critical of Germany: "And yet she must know that again and again, in the plainest language, men like Asquith and Grey have *protested* against the war aims, the breach of the German people's self-determination, which the chauvinist war apostles have set up."

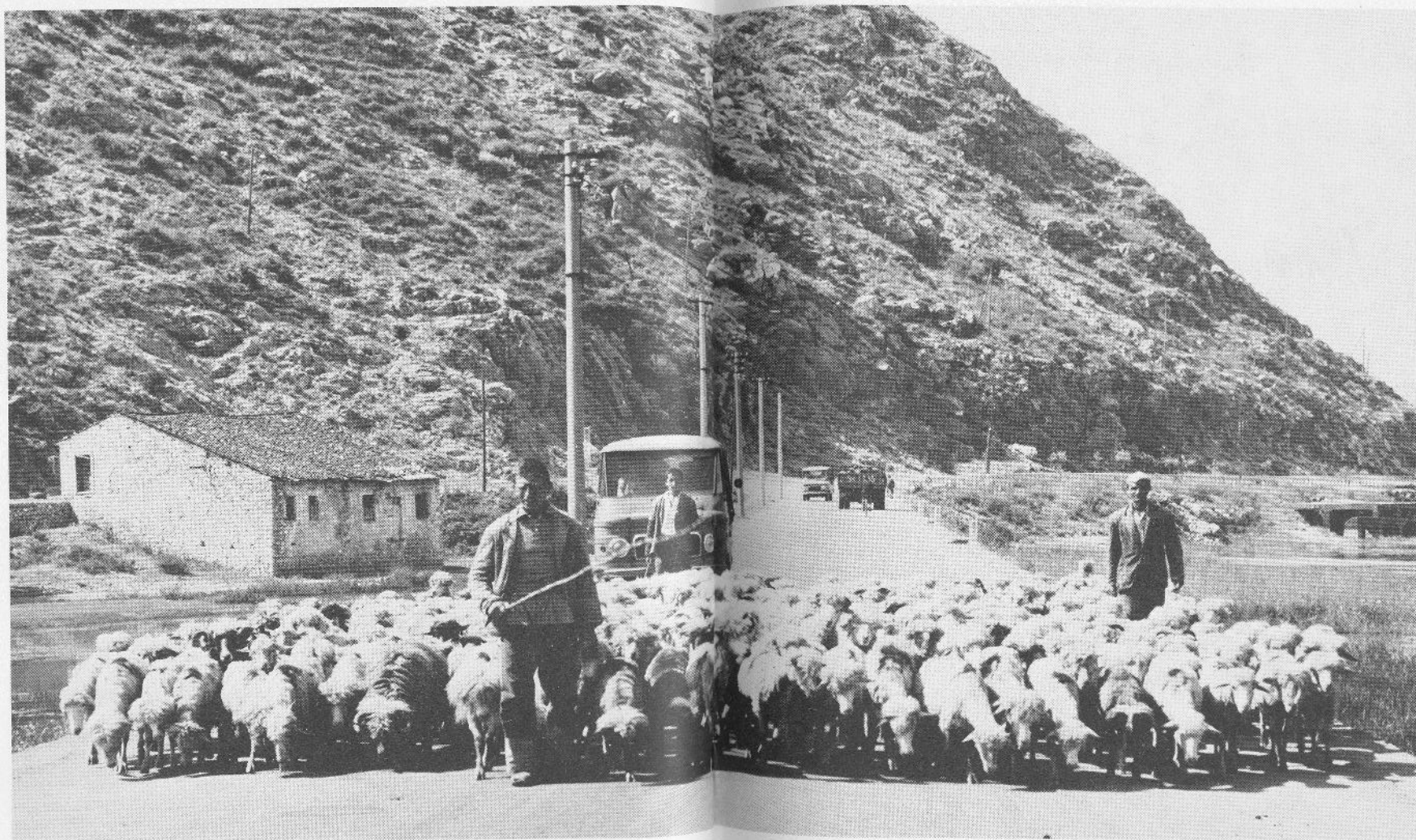
Hjalmar Branting concluded his article with the following lyrical description of that Entente we have just seen in un-

scrupulous diplomatic action, as those "who defend their lives and their rights and the future of democracy and freedom in the world." (*Social-Demokraten*, August 19, 1916)

That such opportunism about war and peace should afterward have been regarded in Albania as a direct threat is no coincidence. The treason of revisionism left its tragic mark on Albania's attainment of nationhood. So it was not by chance that the Albanians reacted strongly when, in the 1950s, the Soviet leaders openly adopted a revisionist attitude to the policy that, during World War I, had laid Albania in ashes and ruins.



In 1947 a Swedish encyclopedia (*Svensk Uppslagsbok*) described Albania as follows: "Compared with European conditions elsewhere, and even in the Balkans, A. has remained into our own days at a low level of development, with an economy chiefly based on agriculture and cattle breeding. . . . Because of the poor quality of the cattle, even cattle breeding yields only modest returns, even though it is the main source of livelihood for a large part of the population. . . . It is carried on extensively . . . and is still partly at the nomadic stage. . . . Almost



all arable soil on the plains was owned until recently by great land-owners, a relic of Osman feudalism. In the mountain districts, on the other hand, there are peasants who own their own small farms. . . . The considerable forests . . . play no role to speak of . . . because of the lack of any orderly silviculture or industry. . . . The great wealth of fish has not been exploited to any extent. . . . Water power is unexploited. . . . Money only circulates to a very limited extent in A. In 1938, for instance, there were only twelve gold francs per inhabitant, i.e., four-

teen times less than in Sweden, and the greater part of the population still lives on the level of barter."

Little in this account calls for comment. In speaking of the considerable oil and mineral resources, mention should perhaps have been made of the fact that they were owned by foreign companies. On the plains, too, the Italians had set up great capitalist estates. In 1938, Albania was a semi-colony; in 1939 it was totally occupied by fascist Italy. The average life expectancy was about thirty years. The lowest in Europe.



At Konispol, on the Greek border in the extreme south, sheep were sent to agricultural collectives in the northern mountains. Mufit Husi, chairman of the Leninism Conquers agricultural collective at Konispol, says: "We've developed agriculture and cattle farming. We've built a school and a hospital and raised the standard of living. Our brothers in the north are worse off. They've only recently set up their collective. At our annual meeting we decided to send them one thousand sheep as a gift. We had eighty-five hundred. Some of us wanted to send more.



But we agreed on one thousand. No one was against it. People must help each other. It's fraternal help. We're not shopkeepers."

The country was poor before the war. The War of Liberation was costly: 2.48 percent of the population died. Every third building was destroyed. Material losses amounted to \$1,603 per inhabitant. The difference between the developed agriculture of the south and on the plains and the poor mountain villages in the north was very great. Today a redistribution of resources is being planned, so that, for in-



stance, a mountain cooperative above Peshkopia and a fertile plains cooperative outside Fieri will reach the same level of development. Yet there will still be a big difference. In the newly formed Stravec cooperative in the mountains above Peshkopia, the members' daily pay rose from eight lek in 1967 to eleven lek in 1968; thirty-six houses have been built and were to get electricity in 1970. In the Albania-China Friendship Cooperative outside Fieri they had a house of culture, a hospital, and a day crèche for children. The daily pay was twenty lek.

This is why the state is investing large sums to develop the economy of the mountain cooperatives. The differences must be overcome. A threshing station at Polis-Mirak, outside Librazhdi, was built at Durrës. This was once a poor cattle district. Though grain was cultivated, it only lasted half a year. Today the acreage under cultivation has risen from 440 acres to 790. In 1967 the district became self-supporting in grain. In 1969 it was able to sell twenty tons to the state. Shaban Nexha said, "We put an end to vendettas during the war; the partisans



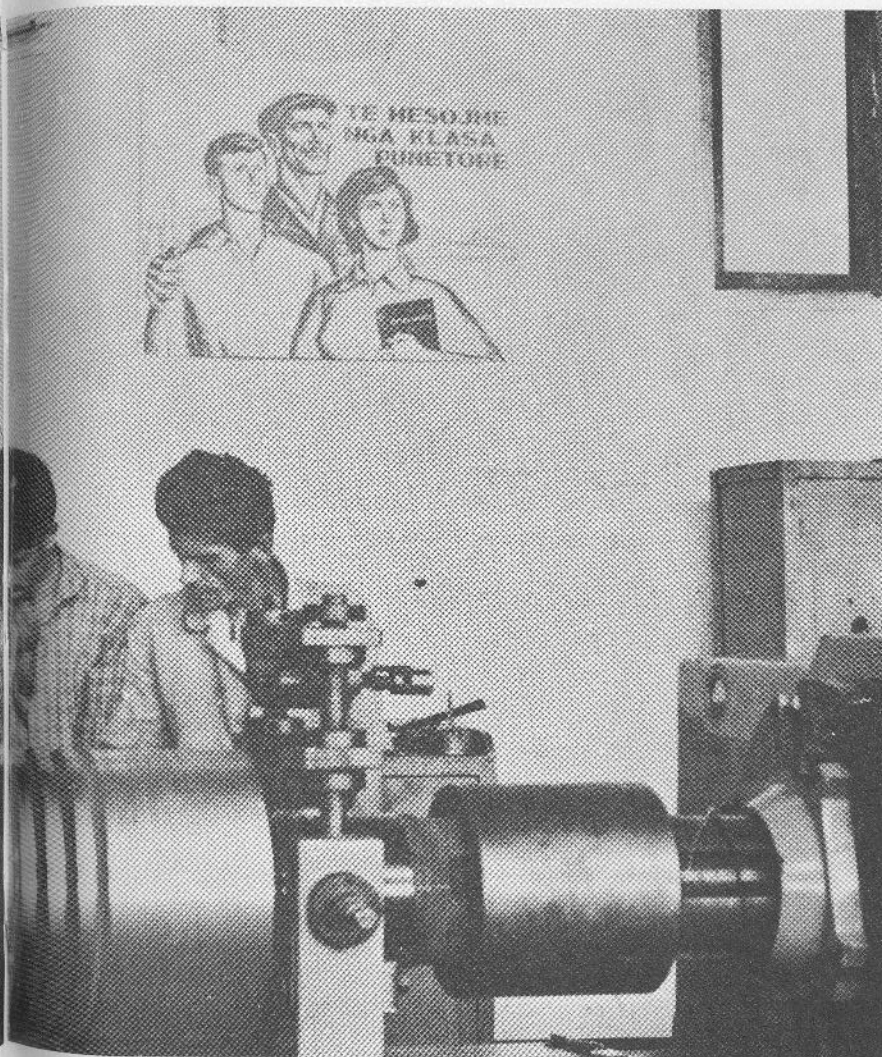
educated us. The young people put an end to religion and the *mullahs*. That was good. We old people agreed too." Once grain for bread had to be imported. By 1968 Albania had become a grain-exporting country. In 1969 Albania imported four thousand high-milking cows from the Netherlands. Agriculture and cattle raising are not treated as secondary interests. At the same time that Albania is investing in industry, it is directing its investments in such a way that they shall serve the interests of agriculture and cattle breeding. Even before the war Albanian goats' milk cheese was exported. Today production is rising.



In the early 1920s it was believed that Albania was going to become the "new Mesopotamia." And all the big international companies began to intrigue. Though oil resources were not that extensive, they were larger than the foreigners knew. Before the war Albanian oil went to Italy. This was one motive for Italy's conquest of the country: it needed oil to power Mussolini's navy and make the Mediterranean "Roman." The Soviet leaders had advised the Albanians against building refineries. It was unnecessary. Today Albania is building refineries; from being an exporter of crude oil, it is to become an exporter of

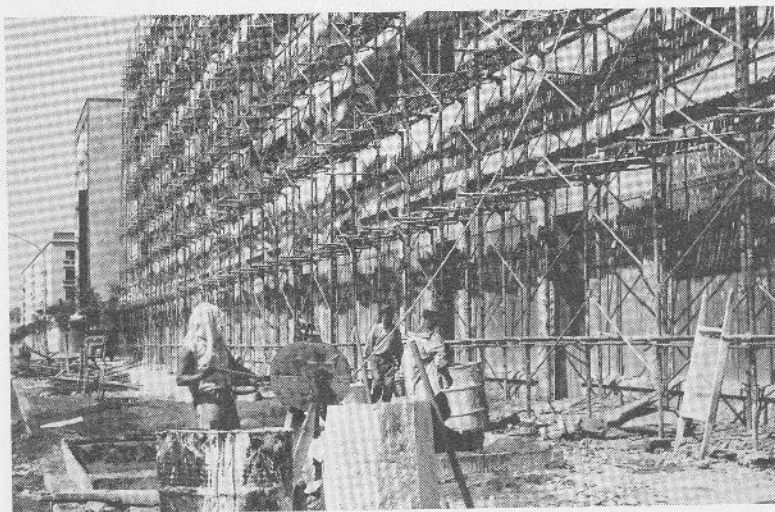


finished products. When the Soviet leaders wanted to break Albania they withdrew their technicians. These technicians took with them their drawings, maps, the results of geological studies. That's how powers like the Soviet Union and the United States behave. And that's why the Albanian politicians are warning countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America not to rely on foreign experts. But this was not necessarily bad. Difficult years followed. Many great industrial projects had to be postponed. Yet it obliged the Albanian workers and technicians to solve



their own problems. The working class had to take charge in all fields, and it managed to produce the necessary technicians from its own ranks. The Soviet leaders had miscalculated. Their attempt to damage Albania and make it into a compliant member of the socialist-imperialist empire actually helped the Albanian people to stand on their own feet.

China has helped Albania with interest-free loans. The superphosphate factory at Lac was built with Chinese help. It is to serve agri-

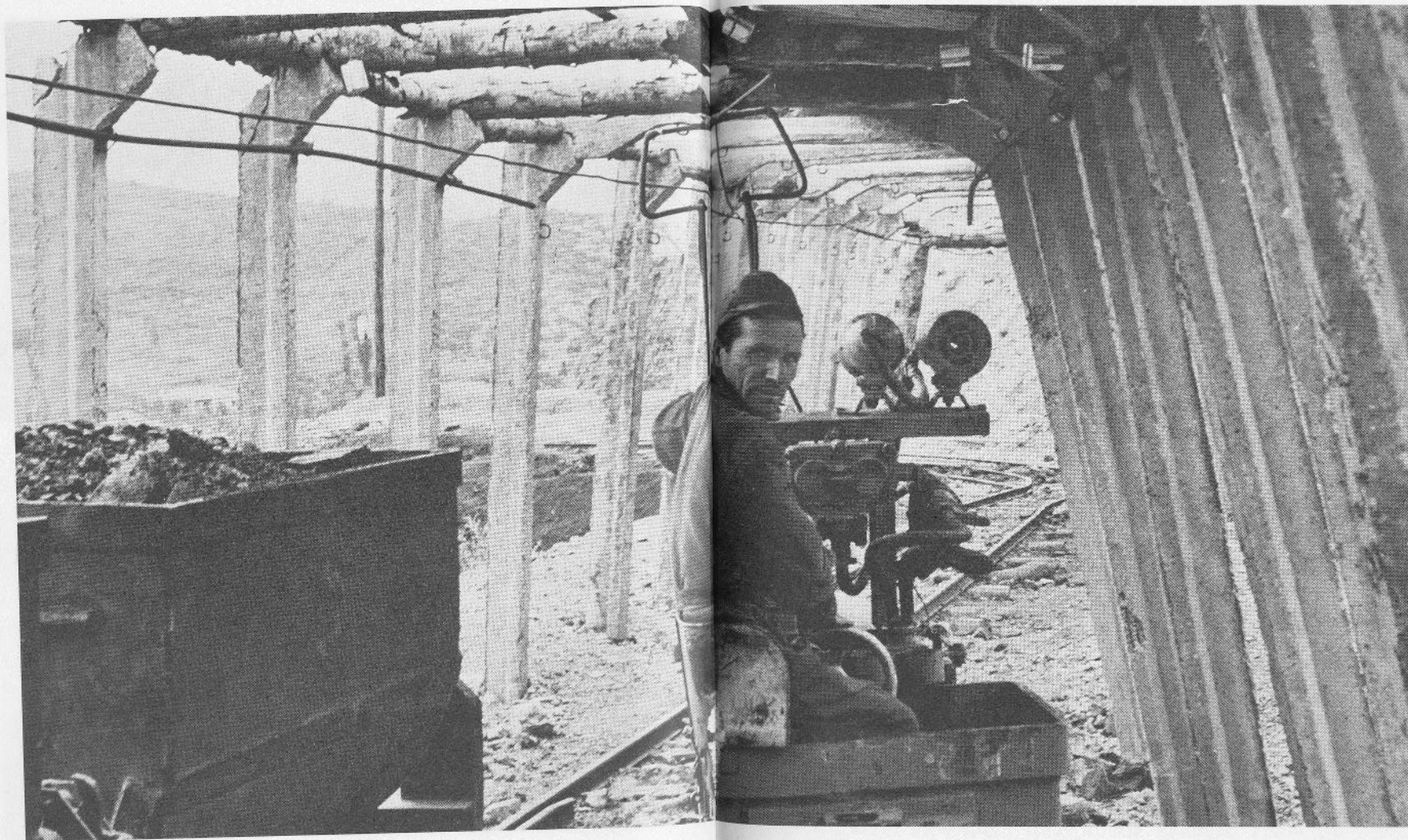


culture; its products are also exported. It is a step in the development of Albania's chemical industry. But the Chinese technicians do not live like "foreign experts." They get the same wages as the Albanians, they have no privileges, they do not bring their wives and children, they form no enclaves of experts with air-conditioned houses, private cars, native servants, and cheap liquor. They stay as short a time as possible. They stayed at Lac for eight months. Their task is to teach what they can in the shortest possible time. This help from China has been important.



When the Soviet leaders began their blockade, Albania had long been under a commercial blockade from the United States. Even in countries like Italy, the Soviet used its connections to close off Albania. But what was really decisive in resisting this economic warfare from both Moscow and Washington were the Albanian people's own efforts. Now the worst is over.

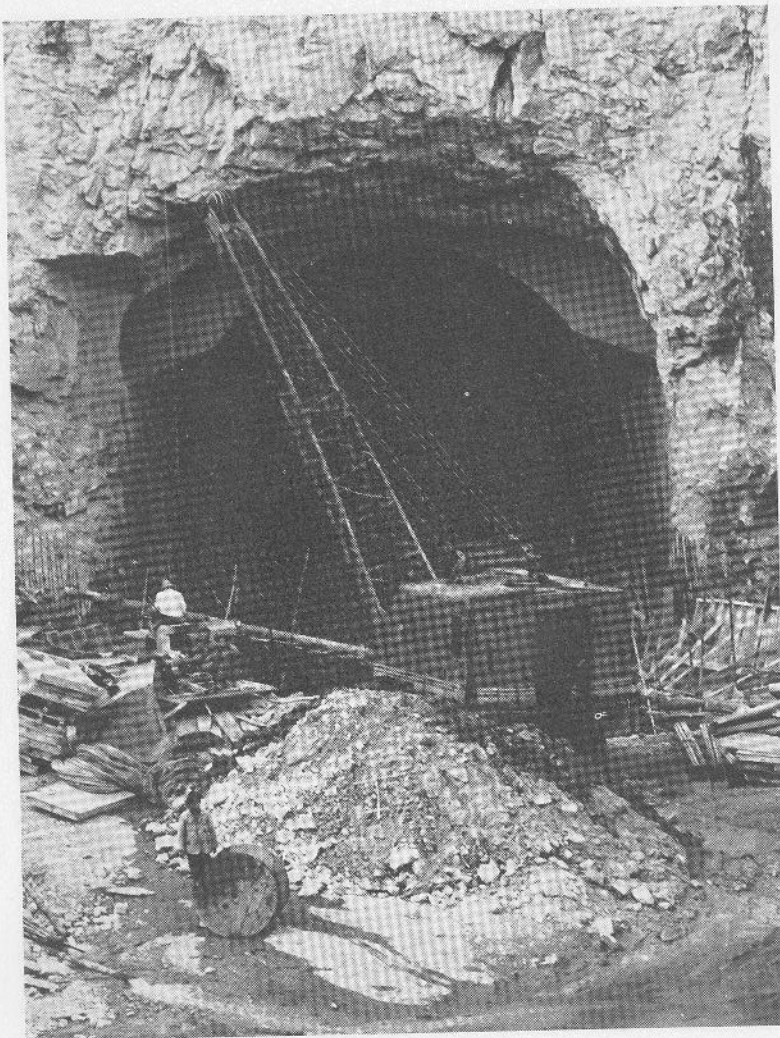
The new steel mill at Elbasani is to be made into a major metallurgical base. The ore at Pishkashi is high grade. Young people are building a railway from Elbasani to Pishkashi. In 1975 800,000 tons of steel will



be produced. The objective for the next stage is 2 million tons. Today the engineering industry is producing 80 percent of the necessary spare parts for tractors. By 1975 it will be producing 100 percent. Three new factories are to be built. Ore from Pishkashi will be the backbone of Albania's new industry. Yet this industrialization will not mean that the country will be divided up into urban aggregations and the countryside depopulated. The present geographical distribution of the population is to be retained. "According to one capitalist calculation, this isn't eco-

nomie," said Perikas Pikuli, a member of the planning commission, "but Albania is a socialist country. Therefore the question is how people want the country to be built up, what kind of environment they want. We see developments in capitalist and revisionist countries. We do not want Albania to look like that. The problem of depopulated areas of the countryside in your countries, in Italy, Yugoslavia, Sweden, and the Soviet Union, are the result of an antipopular policy."

Like most countries Albania has long been potentially wealthy.



Today this wealth is being used for the Albanian people. At Vau in Dejes, on the Drin River east of Shkodra, the Mao Tse-tung Power Station is being built; it is to have an output of 250,000 kilowatts and is the first power station to be wholly planned by Albanian technicians. No foreign experts have had any hand in the project's planning or management. Chinese consultants have been involved in the actual building work, but the Mao Tse-tung Power Station is a great step forward for Albania's youthful technology.

WHICH CLASS COULD LEAD?

On July 9, 1915, Georgi Dimitrov spoke at a mass meeting in Sophia. He was reporting on the Second Social-Democratic Balkan Conference, which had just been held in Bucharest. He spoke of the work of preparing for social-democratic parties in Turkey, Albania, and Montenegro on the basis of international revolutionary socialism. And he went on:

But the conference in Bucharest also adopted an attitude toward the war now being waged and the tasks of the International. It declared *unanimously* that the International must immediately be restored, and that this is only possible on the basis of *revolutionary socialism and proletarian internationalism*. [A storm of applause]

This is why the conference demanded that the social-democratic parties in the warring countries immediately break the so-called *civil peace* and return to a ruthless class war. [Applause]

The conference sent its warmest greetings to Rosa Luxemburg, to Liebknecht, to all who have stood firmly by the principles of international revolutionary socialism. The conference pointed out the absolute necessity of beginning a ruthless struggle against *opportunism, social-chauvinism, and revisionist currents* within the International. [Storm of applause]

Nowhere outside Russia was there less opportunism in the workers' movement than in the Balkans. There the revolutionary tradition was strong. The proletariat were few in numbers, but schooled and conscious. Even so, revolutionary social-democracy in the Balkans did not succeed in carrying out the revolution that was objectively possible and historically necessary during the last phase of World War I.

Everywhere the oppressed masses revolted. Soldiers de-

served and turned their weapons against their own regime. The foreign troops of the occupying powers were demoralized and in a state of disintegration.

At that moment a Democratic Balkan Federation was still an immediate possibility. Afterward it was not, because the Balkan states developed with other goals. Neglected historical possibilities never return in the same form.

The question of why the conscious and revolutionary Balkan proletariat was not successful, despite the consistent and correct policy of their parties, both against opportunism and on the national question, is important. It gives us a key to the Albanian communists' policy during the war of liberation and it is also important in principle. It was by utilizing the lessons to be learned from this historical defeat that the Albanian communists were afterward able to lead their war of liberation and the social revolution.

The Balkan revolutionary social-democrats had adopted a wrong attitude to the question of the peasantry. They did not appreciate the enormous revolutionary power latent in the ruthlessly exploited peasant masses. They regarded them as a reactionary class, and waited for them to become the proletariat. By waiting, the parties cut themselves off from the great—and potentially revolutionary—masses of the people.

There are plenty of people who maintain that theoretical discussion within the labor movement is an evil. All that is necessary is agreement. The movement must not be split by asking questions. That was how the right-wing social-democrats reasoned before World War I. They used this lack of discussion about "theoretical" issues to mask their defection to the camp of the ruling classes. And we all know the catastrophic results of that policy.

Revolutionary social-democracy in the Balkans had not correctly solved the question of what attitude to adopt toward the peasants and their struggle. This fault, this weakness, can in no way be compared with the treason of the right-wing social-democratic leaders. Revolutionary social-democracy in the Balkans made mistakes because it had not sufficiently

analyzed the special problem characteristic of the Balkans, the struggle of the exploited peasant masses against feudal oppression. This was a weakness in their theoretical work. This weakness was historically explicable. But it was to cost the Balkan peoples dearly.

The weakness was obvious during World War I. Capitalism was on the point of collapse. The masses rose. And the revolutionary social-democrats failed to lead these risings. The possibility of a Democratic Balkan Federation was lost.

Albania had no working class in the real sense of the term (in 1912 there were twenty-five factories, with a total of one hundred and fifty workers). Craftsmen and apprentices had been influenced by social-democratic agitation, but it had not reached far beyond their small workshops.

It was the October Revolution in Russia and the new Workers' and Peasants' State that finally affected the masses of the Albanian people. Revolutionary Russia publicized all the secret treaties and openly exposed the whole dirty game behind the world war. These revelations of how the powers played chess with Albania, bickering among themselves over its partition and plunder, immediately became known all over the country and gave rise to a broad popular and anti-imperialist movement in defense of Albania's national independence and territorial integrity. This movement was borne up by the intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie, and the masses of the peasantry.

On June 15, 1919, Georg Brandes, the great Danish literary critic, described Albania's situation as follows:

Italy is occupying a large part of Albania, while the rest is under French occupation. The Albanians themselves have repeatedly asserted their demand for independence, and Italy, after the collapse of Austria and the adventure with the little prince of Wied, long a thing of the past, Italy, either as a joke or seriously, has declared itself willing to recognize the Albanians' independence, since they, though partly Muhammedans and partly Christians, feel themselves to be one people and speak the same language, Albanian. However, the Greeks obstinately persist in calling the southern part of Albania by the old Hellene name of Epiros.

The victorious powers in the "war for democracy" and the "war to end all wars" were busy planning to divide the booty among themselves. In the same article, Georg Brandes wrote:

The greatest and strangest transformation is the one which has been going on in North America's promising if uncompromising president. He has unfolded a pretty banner with fourteen points to it, like so many stars of the first magnitude. Over his head, over America, over Asia, Africa, and Europe, he has waved his banner of righteousness, on which are written in letters of gold the words self-determination, freedom, every kind of reform. And the nations' cries of joy and hymns of gratitude have roared all around him. Then he has folded up his banner, blown his shapely nose in it, and stuck it back in his pocket.

Tragic farce.

AROUND THE GREEN TABLE

Throughout the war, neutral Albania had been occupied by foreign troops. They had set up their own administrations, had collaborated with the local landlords, and had had those patriotic Albanians who protested shot. Apart from those who were executed, seventy thousand died of famine and plague.

The occupying forces had declared their own governments. The Italian government went furthest. On June 3, 1917, it ceremoniously proclaimed, "the union and independence of all Albania."

Well, this sounded too good to be true. Nor was it true; because this "union" and this "independence," according to the same proclamation, was to be "under the kingdom of Italy's defense and protection."

This proclamation was nothing but a bluff; it was valid, for one thing, only where the Italian troops happened to be. It also came to have a singularly hollow ring to it when Lenin caused the secret treaties to be published and it became known how the Italian government had been bought for £50,000,000 sterling and promises of a share of Albania and elsewhere.

On January 18, 1919, the peace conference in Paris began discussing how Albania should be partitioned. Italy, the new Yugoslavia, and Greece all presented their various demands. They did not agree. There simply was not enough of Albania to satisfy them all. Serbia and Greece were not in agreement with Italy. They did not want Italy to get Vlora. But in this question Italy had President Wilson's support. In October 1918 he had promised Italy Vlora and a protectorate over Albania. Because Wilson was supporting the Serbians against

Italy, but wanted to give Italy compensation in—neutral—Albania. The bargaining began.

On April 14, 1919, Wilson declared that he was for the Italian demands for Vlora. The representatives of France and Great Britain agreed that Korca and Gjirokastra should go to Greece. As Harold Nicholson wrote on March 3, 1919: "What is happening in Albania is really a damned shame. It first became an Italian protectorate, and now we are partitioning its borders only because none of us likes the idea of Italy gaining a foothold in the Balkans."

In July 1919, Italy and Greece made a secret agreement as to how the country should be partitioned.

On December 9, France, the United States, and Great Britain agreed on how Albania should be partitioned. Italy was to get Vlora and Greece Gjirokastra. What was left was to be an Italian protectorate.

One month later, Italy, France, and Great Britain tried another gambit. Italy was to be allowed to keep Fiume (Rijeka), while Yugoslavia was to be allowed to take Shkodra from Albania. But the United States wouldn't agree to this.

And the various powers all had their own men among the leading Albanian landowners, ready to serve their interests. It seemed that Albania had been wiped out.

BUT WHAT DID THE PEOPLE SAY?

On November 28, 1918, on the sixth anniversary of Albania's declaration of independence, the people of Vlora demonstrated, defying the Italian authorities' ban. The forces of law and order intervened. Avni Rustemi spoke. Among other things, he said:

The blessed soil of Vlora is our soil. All the soil of Albania is our soil. We intend to live in freedom on this soil and no power shall prevail on us to abandon our goal.

Italian propaganda tried to present Italy as Albania's protector, tried to turn the people against the Balkan states, tried to gain the people's support for an Italian protectorate over Albania. This propaganda won over the landlords (though of course not those who were working for the Serbians, such as Esad Pascha Toptani). But it did not win over the people. In Shkodra, *Populi*, the organ of the secret liberation committee, wrote on February 14, 1919:

Order shall be maintained in Albania; but it shall be maintained by us. Albania shall be governed, but Albania shall be governed by Albanians. However heavy this burden may be, it will be borne; however difficult the consequences may be, we shall bear them, because it is our privilege. . . . In this way we can save ourselves.

In pamphlets, in newspaper articles, by word of mouth, the new slogans were spread through the country:

National independence is no gift from heaven. We must earn it. Strive to achieve it at all costs. (*Koha e Re*, Shkodra, January 1, 1919)

In March 1919, a group of teachers and patriotic intellectuals assembled in the village of Brataj outside Vlora. They gathered in order to prepare an armed rising against the Italian occupiers.

While the representatives of the powers were bargaining over Albania in Paris, the patriots demanded a national assembly that could save the fatherland. Delegates were elected and assembled at Lushnja in January 1920. The assembly demanded the complete freedom of Albania. Every form of foreign mandate or foreign protectorate or limitation on Albanian independence was condemned:

The terrible news of the doom pronounced on us at the Paris conference—this shameful market where peoples are being bargained for—has everywhere aroused the wrath of the Albanian people and their justifiable opposition. . . . The Albanian people prefer to die rather than change owners like a flock of sheep and become a piece of loot for those who for the moment are controlling European diplomacy.

The assembly elected a national Albanian government with its seat at Tirana and condemned the obedient Italian-influenced government at Durres as “un-national.”

Faced with the popular support gained by the new national government, the compliant collaborationist government at Durres was forced to disband and the foreign occupying troops had to withdraw from the interior of Albania. Italy gathered its forces around Vlora. Italy had no intention of losing Vlora. Vlora should be Italian.

At the same time Esad Pascha Toptani—who had always collaborated with the foreign powers—assembled his forces to overthrow the national government.

At first the national government tried to solve these questions by peaceful negotiations. But, wrote the newspaper *Drita* at Gjirokastra, the weapon of criticism had not helped; armed criticism was necessary. The military situation was difficult. Italy was a great power. Albania was small, it was poor, it had no army. But when the secret Committee for the Defense of the Nation, in consultation with the national gov-

ernment at Tirana, called the people to armed revolt, on May 20, 1920, then the peasants rose. On June 3, the committee sent an ultimatum to the Italian commander-in-chief: within twenty-four hours he must promise to commence the evacuation of Himara, Tepelana, and Vlora and hand them over to the national government at Tirana. When the Italian commander-in-chief did not bother to reply, the attack began. At midnight on June 5, 1920, the peasants assembled and attacked the Italian garrisons outside Vlora. Within a few hours the fortresses of the occupants had fallen. The entire occupied area—except for the town of Vlora—was liberated. Armed criticism of the diplomacy of the powers had begun.

On June 11, 1920, the Italian positions in the city of Vlora were attacked. Vlora was being held by two Italian army divisions, in the port lay units of the Italian navy, and the city had been fortified. Three thousand peasants forced their way into the suburbs. They then withdrew, and the siege began.

At the same time the government at Tirana took the offensive against Esad Pascha Toptani's forces in the north. Esad Pascha Toptani was in Paris. In order to secure the position of the landowners, he was once again serving the interests of foreign powers. Avni Rustemi was sent to Paris to eliminate him. Avni Rustemi was a member of the Committee for the Defense of the Nation. On May 31, 1920, Rustemi arrived in Paris, took a room in the Hotel des Tuileries, 10 Rue St.-Hyacinthe, close to the Hotel Continental, where Esad Pascha Toptani had his headquarters. Esad Pascha Toptani had plenty of guards, both French *sécurité* and his own bodyguards. By June 2, Rustemi had made some contacts among Esad Pascha Toptani's servants. Rustemi began mapping out Esad Pascha Toptani's movements and prepared for action. On June 13, 1920, Avni Rustemi killed Esad Pascha Toptani with two revolver shots when Esad Pascha Toptani and his mistress Elise Dujour were driving down the Rue Castiglione.

On June 16, 1920, the leader of the Yugoslav delegation, Pasic, made a statement to *Le Temps*. He said:

This is indeed a sad loss. First of all, because he was our friend, a friend of Serbia; but he was also your friend, France's friend...."

Esad Pascha Toptani's forces were crushed, he had been executed, the national government at Tirana liberated the greater part of the country, and at Vlora the Italian occupying forces were being besieged by Albanian freedom-fighters.

But the Albanians were not alone in their struggle for national liberation. National liberation was a class question. Just as the Albanian patriots were fighting the landlords and the feudal forces to obtain their independence, the diplomats of the powers also had their own people against them when they sat playing games for Albania's future.

The revolutionary workers' movement in Europe was not pacifist. It drew a distinction between justified and unjustified war. Even during World War I, Lenin had pointed out that:

A war by the oppressed (e.g., colonized peoples) against imperialist, i.e., oppressor, powers, is truly a national war. Such a war is also possible today. The "defense of the fatherland" of a national, oppressed people is not a swindle and socialists are in no way opposed to the "defense of the fatherland" in such a war.

At the same time the Italian troops were being besieged at Vlora, the Second Congress of the Third International was being held in Moscow. There, conditions for membership in the Communist International were decided. The eighth condition ran:

A particularly explicit and clear attitude on the question of the colonies and the oppressed peoples is necessary for the parties in those countries where the bourgeoisie possesses colonies and oppresses other nations. Every party that wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to expose the tricks and dodges of "its" imperialists in the colonies, to support every colonial liberation movement, not merely in words but in deeds, to demand the expulsion of their own imperialists from these colonies, to inculcate among the workers of their country a genuinely fraternal attitude to the working people of the colonies and the oppressed

nations, and to carry on systematic agitation among the troops of their country against any oppression of the colonial peoples.

The conscious Italian proletariat did its internationalist duty; it sabotaged transport to the expeditionary corps, it delayed ammunition trains. Inside the Italian army it agitated against the dirty war. Despite what the generals said, their army was falling to pieces. Malaria was raging at Vlora, a hundred soldiers were dying every day. Politically conscious workers were agitating at home. Soldiers refused to obey orders. They sang "Canzone d'Albania": the refrain to

Come let us flee
as quick as we can
from Albania's soil!
Let us flee from malaria,
from slaughter and starvation!
Death to our miserable government
which gives us this hell!

Faced by this double attack, from the Albanian liberation movement and from its own proletariat, the Italian government was forced to let its generals give the order to ship home the increasingly rebellious Italian soldiers. On August 2, Italy had to agree to withdraw from Albanian soil; on September 3, the Albanian freedom-fighters marched into liberated Vlora.

Albania applied for membership in the League of Nations and the French said this was a "challenge to the powers."

But the representative of the British world empire had suddenly been overcome with understanding for the Albanian people—because oil wells had been discovered in Albania—and on December 18, 1920, the Albanian government's representative took his seat in the League of Nations. The Albanian representative in London, Konica, wrote on September 25, 1921, to the Albanian representative at Geneva, Fan Noli:

If we don't want to give the oil concession to Anglo-Persian, there is another British company which is interested and which would perhaps give us better terms. In any case, it would be most unsuit-

able, not to say catastrophic, if we didn't give this concession to the British.

Italy had demanded "strategic and economic" interests in Albania, and was granted strategic interests—but Great Britain refused to agree to the economic demands and the foreign office spokesman informed the Italians:

We want to guarantee not only Albania's political autonomy and territorial integrity, but also its economic independence . . . but of course, His Majesty's Government cannot prevent British citizens from carrying on business in Albania, or enjoin the Albanian government from giving out monopolistic concessions.

At the same time the great powers gave Italy the task of defending Albania's frontiers in the event of their being attacked.

So, Albanian independence was recognized. Albania's economic freedom was a freedom to grant oil concessions. Italy had obtained a shadowy protectorate over an independent and autonomous member of the League of Nations.

In Italy, Benito Mussolini described Albania's path to independence in the following words:

Foreign agents and provocateurs exploited certain native compromises and incited the Albanian population against us. This noble country which lies only twelve hours from Bari and which has always been the recipient of our civilization's currents; this country in which a few sparks of modern civic life were only able to shine thanks to the influence we exercised there; this country suddenly revolted against us. We had had a hospital mission in Vlora since 1908, and since 1914 we had had troops there. We had built the city, the hospital, the magnificent roads which had been able to protect the Serbian army when it fled in 1916. In Albania we had sacrificed millions of lire and thousands of soldiers, to give this little country a future and an orderly existence.

The war of liberation had ended in victory; the struggle for oil and the Albanian market could now begin.

CONCERNING OIL, LAND, AND THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE

Albania's oil was in demand. Albania was a poor country, but it had natural wealth. In the view of the Italian geologists, Albania ought to become as famous an oil district as Oklahoma, Louisiana, or Texas.

Representatives of oil interests in the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy came flocking to Albania: the Standard Oil Company, Sinclair Oil Exploration, Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Ferrovie Statali del Regno d'Italia, Societa Italiana delle Miniere di Selenizza, Syndicat Franco-Albanais.

On March 25, 1921, the D'Arcy Exploration Company Ltd., a subsidiary of Anglo-Persian, was successful in obtaining the concession. But this had to be approved by the Albanian parliament. Under the terms of this concession, Anglo-Persian would own the whole of Albania for fifty years. The struggle among the oil companies went on. On February 20, 1923, the Italian minister at Durres was able to report to Mussolini that it seemed likely that the British would succeed in obtaining a monopoly over Albania. Mussolini told his ambassadors in Washington and Paris to get busy.

The U.S. state department intervened immediately and asked its representative in Albania to let the Albanian government know that Washington demanded an open-door policy in Albania. The United States contacted the other "interested governments," and on May 16, 1923, the United States sent a memorandum on the oil question to the Albanian government, insisting that Albania follow an open-door policy. On May 24, 1923, Mr. Sheffield, Standard Oil's representative, intervened with a letter. France had already demanded an open door. Great Britain told its vice-consul that if Albania

didn't sign the monopoly concession, there would be serious consequences for the country's frontiers. Day after day, the Albanian parliament delayed its decision.

At the same time, the famine among the peasantry was growing worse. Moneylenders and landlords were oppressing the peasants. Here and there, peasants rioted and killed tax-collectors and moneylenders. Agitation against the attempts of the foreign oil companies to get control of the country grew.

Ahmed Zogu was minister of the interior. He took more and more power into his hands. He collaborated with the foreign interests. To suppress the opposition he had Avni Rustemi murdered on April 20, 1924. This murder precipitated the national revolution. The democratic press, the young intellectuals, the patriotic nationalists, and the peasants all revolted. Ahmed Zogu's forces were defeated and Zogu had to flee the country. By June 10, 1924, the democratic revolution was victorious. It was victorious at a time when reactionary forces were in power in the surrounding countries. In Italy Mussolini had seized power. In Bulgaria, the September revolt of 1923 had been suppressed and a dictatorship established.

The new democratic government formed by Fan Noli on June 16 planned to eradicate feudalism, introduce democracy, carry through radical reforms within the state apparatus, reduce the tax burden on the poor, introduce general compulsory education, and secure the freedoms of the press, of expression, and of assembly.

To do all this, it also had to secure Albania's economic independence. The proposed trade agreement between Albania and Italy, which the previous government had worked out and which gave Italy a monopoly of Albania's foreign trade, was not ratified. Albania, the new government explained, was to have friendly relations with all countries. Even with the Soviet Union.

Fan Noli refused to submit to Mussolini's dictates, refused to accept a loan that the League of Nations tried to mediate,

refused Anglo-Persian its oil monopoly, refused the United States an "open door" into Albania, and refused to accept Yugoslav and Greek demands for Albanian territory.

It was a democratic revolution, and all of a sudden the oil companies and their governments and diplomats found they were able to agree among themselves. They had strong support within the country. The property and power of the landlords were threatened by the democratic revolution.

On June 25, 1924, the presidium of the Balkan Communist Federation and the Italian Communist Party issued a joint appeal to workers and peasants in the Balkans and Italy and to the working people of Albania:

A great revolution has broken out in one of the countries of the Balkans, Albania. This movement is fighting to crush the beys' power in order to confiscate the great estates and distribute the land to those who have none. This movement has declared war on the political reaction which rests on the power of the beys. This movement wants to give the entire Albanian people its political rights and to defend Albania.

The workers and peasants of the Balkans and Italy were exhorted to prevent any intervention by Italy, Yugoslavia, or Greece in the affairs of Albania. The manifesto turned directly to the working people of Albania and said:

The revolution has been victorious. . . . Take measures so that the blood you have shed for freedom is not used to oppress you. Be on your guard so that you do not fall victim to reactionary forces hiding in your own country and to the imperialist intentions of Italy and other countries, which want to turn your country into a colony.

But there was a flaw in the democratic government and among the classes supporting it. The peasants were demanding land. The bourgeois democrats were afraid of the reaction, which was calling the distribution of the land "Bolshevik." They were talking about democracy and parliament. The distribution of the land—if it succeeded—should be a question for the new parliament. It was precisely this that the

working people of Albania had been warned about in the appeal of the Balkan Communist Federation and the Italian Communist Party:

It is precisely at this moment you must devote all your forces to securing the social and political victories you have won; if you don't, then you will be making a mistake and afterward your struggle will be twice as hard.

At Gjirokastra, *Drita*, the organ of the revolutionary democrats, said:

The fundamental condition of Albania's civilization is that feudalism must be annihilated. The feudal lords represent nothing but blackmail. Such a class has no right to live. It means certain death to Albania. Tear up the tree by the roots! Any hesitation is a serious act of treason against Albanian history. Give the worker back his soil, which he has watered with his sweat and his blood, and feudalism will have lost.

But the government was hesitant, let itself be scared, went the legal way, announced an election, and went out to campaign, letting the partition of the land wait. Later Fan Noli was to write:

I threw the landowners into a rage. Afterward, when I didn't drive them off their estates, I lost the support of the mass of the peasantry.

On December 10, 1924, before the election campaign was over, Ahmed Zogu attacked from Yugoslav territory. He led an army consisting of emigré landlords, Serbian army units, and the remains of Wrangel's White Russian army.

This was open invasion from a neighboring state, and the government at Tirana immediately sent telegrams to Italy, France, and Britain. Mussolini, Chamberlain, and Herriot did not reply.

The government at Tirana telegraphed the League of Nations, saying that a member state was being exposed to invasion and asking for help in bringing about an armistice. But the League's secretary-general, Eric Drummond, sixteenth Earl of Perth, tenth Viscount of Strathallan, felt he did not

need to reply since the Anglo-Persian Oil Company had told him that it was its intention to change the government of this little member state, and the governments of Great Britain and Yugoslavia had already agreed that this government was Bolshevik-influenced and was a threat to "peace and order."

While Zogu, at the head of the Serbian troops and Wrangel's White Russian army, was advancing toward Tirana, Mussolini made an agreement with Yugoslavia. Mussolini had no intention of letting Albania become a Yugoslav vassal state. Mussolini wanted Albania for himself.

On December 24, 1924, Ahmed Zogu marched into Tirana. The white terror began. Ahmed Zogu said that "new ideas, too hostile to the state"—Bolshevik ideas—had been spread in Albania, but that the new government's home policy "is going to be a ruthless struggle, until this idea has been extirpated from Albania."

In the journal of the Communist International, Georgi Dimitrov wrote:

Ahmed Zogu's counterrevolutionary coup d'état in Albania, which was carried out with the help of Yugoslavia and its armed forces, has advanced the Balkan reactionary front to the Adriatic Sea and has deprived the Macedonian people of one of its main supports in its struggle for freedom, and the revolutionary movement in the Balkans has lost a base area.

The democratic revolution had failed. The bourgeois democrats had not been able to accept the demands of the peasants for a redistribution of the land; there was no organization capable of leading the people's revolutionary struggle, and things had turned out for the working people of Albania just as the Balkan Communist Federation and Italy's Communist Party had warned them they would.

A CERTAIN KING ZOG

Now peace and order had won the day in Albania. On February 9, 1925, the governments of Great Britain and Italy came to an agreement about Albania's oil resources. Ahmed Zogu granted six concessions: the Anglo-Persian Oil Company got 430,000 acres for sixty years, Ferrovie Statali del Regno d'Italia got 116,513 acres for seventy years, Selenizza-SIMSA got 5,134 acres, Standard Oil got 190,000 acres, H. H. Rushton got 43,000 acres, and Syndicat Franco-Albanais got 290,000 acres. The companies were to pay two gold francs per hectare (about one franc an acre) a year.

The State Bank of Albania was founded—but under article 2 of its statutes, Albanian citizens could not own more than a total of 49 percent of the shares. In reality, Italian financiers took charge of all the shares and the State Bank of Albania, actually in the hands of the Italian banks, was run by Italians. (Even as late as 1954, Italy and Great Britain were quarreling about who had the right to the Albanian gold reserves, which the German occupiers had stolen and taken away. Great Britain maintained that the gold was war booty; Italy maintained that the Albanian State Bank had been Italian property and that Great Britain—which, after all, had also recognized the Italian conquest of Albania in 1939—should therefore hand the gold over to Rome. That it was a question of the Albanian people's gold was—as everyone of course understands—utterly uninteresting, from the point of view of international law.)

In 1925, Ahmed Zogu went on handing out concessions to various companies: copper, sulphur, mercury . . . land for large-scale farming.

But the greatest deal of all, the one that made Ahmed Zogu very rich, was SVEA (the Company for the Economic Development of Albania). This company was to loan Albania 50 million gold francs, to be paid at the rate of 7.5 million the first year, 7.5 million the second year, 10 million the third year, 12.5 million the fourth year, and 12.5 million the fifth year. But the interest was to be paid on the whole amount, irrespective of expenses. As security, Albania was to hand over to SVEA the Albanian customs and excise duties (6 million gold francs per year), the match monopoly, and the monopoly on cigarette paper (2.5 million gold francs per year).

This made the corruption so obvious that difficulties arose even in Ahmed Zogu's rump parliament. On November 20, 1926, a revolt broke out in the north. Ahmed Zogu appealed to Mussolini, and on November 27 signed the "Tirana Pact." The following year the alliance was signed. Italy got the right to intervene in Albania in order to "preserve the status quo in Albania, politically, juridically, and territorially."

Albania had become an Italian protectorate. Italian "instructors" were attached to the Albanian armed forces, and each time Albania had difficulties with its payments, Italy was granted new privileges.

Ahmed Zogu had himself crowned king. But this kingship by the grace of Italy and Great Britain (SVEA and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company) is of little interest. He was a feudal lord, supported by other feudal lords, by the Church, and by the moneylenders inside the country, and made money by serving foreign powers. Kings of his kind are a dime a dozen in independent and colonized countries. Today, as then in Albania.

He grew rich on bribes, he grew rich on his estates, he took his slice of the taxes levied in the country. In the year 1934–1935, the following amounts went straight into his pocket:

Household of His Majesty	300,000 gold francs
Rent allowance	20,000 gold francs
Household of Her Majesty	88,000 gold francs
Master of Ceremonies' salary	4,752 gold francs

Salaries, the Royal household	14,900 gold francs
Travel allowances	2,000 gold francs
Office materials	2,500 gold francs
Salaries to the inspectorate	22,282 gold francs
Travel and various expenses	9,000 gold francs

Total 463,434 gold francs

In 1931, Italy invested 10 million gold francs in Albania. On March 3, 1933, it was announced that Italy had allocated £2 million sterling to expand Italian oil concessions in Albania: "This oil will cover Italy's home consumption."

When Ahmed Zogu showed signs of playing fast and loose with his old financier, Yugoslavia, Mussolini sent twenty warships on a "friendly visit" to Durres, and Ahmed Zogu hastened to apologize. On September 30, 1935, a big new loan was made to Albania so that SVEA could "expand its activities in Albania in the interests of the Italian nation." Ahmed Zogu informed the League of Nations that Albania could not participate in any sanctions against Italy, "Albania's close friend and ally."

In 1936, there was a government agreement between Albania and Italy. Thirty thousand Italian colonists were to be given homes in Albania; Italian schools were to be set up all over the country. When it became obvious that Italy intended to occupy Albania and the Albanian people demanded weapons to defend themselves, Ahmed Zogu had the patriots thrown into prison, and when Italy attacked Albania, Ahmed Zogu took the state's assets and fled to Greece.

ON GETTING TO KNOW ONE'S FRIENDS

On April 7, 1939, Italian troops landed in Durres. In all the towns and villages of Albania the occupiers spread leaflets: "We come as friends. Be calm. If you make any resistance you will suffer for it." That day Radio Tirana sent out an appeal for help. This appeal was directed to Great Britain, France, and all the countries of the world.

Resistance to the invasion was weak and uncoordinated. Ahmed Zogu tried to imprison all who wanted to defend the country. Fascist Italy had good friends and well-placed agents in Albania. The troops that wanted to resist found that their ammunition had vanished and that the few Albanian pieces of artillery had been put out of action.

Before Ahmed Zogu fled with the state's funds, he sent an obsequious telegram to Mussolini:

Excellency! Do not forget how highly the Albanian nation and I prize your friendship. This precious friendship is an invaluable gauge of our two nations' intimate collaboration in an alliance based on mutual confidence. . . . I appeal to Your Excellency in the name of the friendship which has bound us together for thirteen years not to expose Albania to a damage which your good heart would not wish to permit, and therefore I suggest that you decree that we study a military agreement which will solve our conflicts.

And Ahmed Zogu sent his close friends to the general who was commanding the invasion troops:

The Royal Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Excellency!

Tirana, April 7, 1939

On the orders of His Majesty I have the honor to inform Your

Excellency that His Excellency Rrok Gera, minister of economics, and lieutenant on the General Staff Samih Koka, have been ordered to enter into negotiations with Your Excellency concerning the grounds of a military agreement which will lead to the Italian forces' collaboration with the Albanian forces in Albania. . . .

But Mussolini had no further need of the obliging—if somewhat unreliable—Ahmed Zogu. He gave the invading force orders to occupy Tirana as quickly as possible.

On April 8, 1939, Galeazo Ciano, count of Cortelazzo, the Italian minister of foreign affairs and Mussolini's son-in-law, arrived in Tirana.

The Italian occupation of Albania had been a goal of Italian foreign policy for fifty years. What had now befallen the country was not unexpected. But this time the curtain seemed to go down for good. The long struggle for national independence had ended with the country's occupation.

The policies of the powers were the same as before. For them, Albania was small change. In 1924, when Fan Noli had appealed for help against the Serbian invasion, Chamberlain had made sure that the League of Nations did not take up the question. When Mussolini occupied the country, Chamberlain spoke in the House of Commons. It was April 13, 1939. He said that "public opinion was shocked" but maintained that the Anglo-Italian agreement had not been disturbed.

In the House of Lords, Lord Halifax found the right tone of voice, a hypocritical one: "Nothing in this affair could have shocked religious feelings more profoundly than the fact that the invasion took place on what most Christians consider the holiest day of the year."

He also said that the Anglo-Italian agreement had not been disturbed by this regrettable occurrence.

On November 1, the British government announced that it had asked the Italian government to be allowed to station a consul-general at Tirana.

In France, Daladier spoke about the defense of France and its empire, and about defending France's destiny. Later, in September, the French government informed the Italian government that it recognized Italian interests in the Balkans.

The Hungarian fascist government mobilized six divisions in order to bring pressure to bear on Yugoslavia if Yugoslavia should protest the occupation. Yugoslavia did not protest. But the classes of 1907 and 1908 were called up to defend the Yugoslav frontier against Albania, in case any Albanian refugees should try to get out of Albania and so infringe Yugoslav territory. The Greek government "assured the Greek people that Greece's integrity and independence is wholly assured." The Soviet Union protested; it was the only power that refused to recognize Italy's occupation of Albania.

Apart from Albanian emigrés abroad—who obviously protested against the occupation of their fatherland—strong protests came from two quarters: in the colonial and dependent countries the masses demonstrated their solidarity with the Albanian people and their loathing of the fascist occupants, and great demonstrations occurred in Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt. In the countries of western Asia and in India the people protested against this new result of the policies of Munich. Communist parties and revolutionary organizers all over the world, too, protested the occupation. The Swedish Communist Party (a section of the Communist International) sent the following message:

Sweden's Communist Party's eleventh congress expresses its flaming protest and its loathing of Italian fascism's latest deed of violence. The sanguinary attack on Albania's land and people is fresh evidence of fascism's greedy policy of conquest and of the imminent danger to all small states.

It is a blow to the illusion that a small country can save itself from war and fascism merely by declaring itself neutral.

Not a policy of neutrality and capitulation, but a return to collective security and a firm policy in unity and solidarity among all the forces of peace and democracy is the only power that can check the progress of the fascist aggressors!

On May 1, 1939, the Communist International wrote in its *Chronik der Ereignisse*:

The German fascist invasion of Czechoslovakia was followed by the Italian fascist attack on Albania, which proceeded by the usual methods. Troops were concentrated in Italian ports, to the

accompaniment of solemn promises to the English government, whose head once again chose to pay homage to the sport of fishing. A campaign of unparalleled deception was launched in the Italian press—Mussolini's mouthpiece, the fascist journalist *Gayda*, tried to propagate the myth that the Italian action was intended to prevent King Zog from attacking Yugoslavia. All the more bitter was the reality of Italian naval and air bombardments that reduced the Albanian coastal towns to ruins. And yet, the Italian bandits did not have an easy time of it. The so-called elite troops which occupied Durazzo were forced back on numerous occasions by poorly armed Albanian army units and partisans. A small mountain people took up the struggle as the great West European powers once again merely stood by as this new blow against the status quo was struck. The Albanian people has temporarily lost its independence; but the Italian taskmasters will hardly succeed in consolidating their foreign domination over this brave mountain people.

Under the heading "Unser Wort zu Tagesfragen," the Comintern's executive committee indicated one of the important characteristics of what was happening:

In spite of the enormous power of the attacker, the Albanian people defended its independence with every weapon at its disposal. It could not withstand the overwhelming might of the bloodstained bandits because it was isolated in its struggle, because Chamberlain uses the umbrella of his speeches to cover up his maneuvers toward another Munich. . . . The struggle of the small and weak Albanian people against the fascist aggressors has aroused great admiration among the Balkan masses. This struggle has increased their determination to carry through to an end the struggle against fascism and defeatism. . . .

And the Comintern's secretary-general, Georg Dimitrov, placed the attack on Albania in its historical context:

The working class of the capitalist countries is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of May 1st under conditions of a new imperialist war, of a social crisis, and of a sharpening struggle between an aggressive fascism and the even more united forces of the antifascist movement.

We are already in the second year of an imperialist war which is being waged on three continents and is causing death and de-

struction in China, Spain, Abyssinia, Albania, Central Europe, and distant Asia. The ruling circles of England and France, which disposed of the forces and possibilities for effectively opposing the fascist aggressors on the grounds of collective security and preventing the outbreak of war, have by their policy of nonintervention and course toward Munich doomed millions to destruction. . . .

By the spring of 1939, World War II had been being waged for several years. It was a war for a new partition of the world. German, Italian, and Japanese imperialists—who regarded themselves as underdogs—were fighting to get a larger slice of the pie. The British and French imperialists who ruled over large empires were trying to keep theirs. The United States was waiting to see what would happen, as it had waited during the preliminary phase of World War I.

By the spring of 1939 the policy the British and French imperialists had chosen was obvious. Ethiopia had been sacrificed to Italy; the Spanish government had been strangled—with all the necessary hypocritical declarations; Austria had been sacrificed to Germany; the sovereign state of Czechoslovakia had been divided up at Munich, after which Germany had quietly swallowed the pieces. In China, Japan had long been waging a war of conquest. All the talk of "collective security" and the "defense of democracy" remained nothing but talk. The governments in London and Paris had done everything to avoid creating a real collective security together with the Soviet Union. On March 10, 1939, Stalin had presented his report to the Eighteenth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Among other things, he said:

Thus the war, which has stolen so imperceptibly upon the nations, has drawn over five hundred million people into its orbit and has extended its sphere of action over a vast territory, stretching from Tientsin, Shanghai, and Canton, through Abyssinia, to Gibraltar. . . . The new imperialist war became a fact. . . . It is a distinguishing feature of the new imperialist war that it has not yet become universal, a world war. The war is being waged by aggressor states, who in every way infringe upon the interests of

the nonaggressive states, primarily Britain, France, and the U.S.A., while the latter draw back and retreat, making concession after concession to the aggressors.

Thus we are witnessing an open redivision of the world and spheres of influence at the expense of the nonaggressive states, without the least attempt at resistance, and even with a certain connivance, on their part.

Incredible, but true.

To what are we to attribute this onesided and strange character of the new imperialist war?

How is it that the nonaggressive countries, which possess such vast opportunities, have so easily and without resistance abandoned their positions and their obligations to please the aggressors?

Is it to be attributed to the weakness of the nonaggressive states? Of course not! Combined, the nonaggressive, democratic states are unquestionably stronger than the fascist states, both economically and militarily.

To what then are we to attribute the systematic concessions made by these states to the aggressors? . . .

. . . The policy of nonintervention reveals an eagerness, a desire not to hinder the aggressors in their nefarious work: not to hinder Japan, say, from embroiling herself in a war with China, or, better still, with the Soviet Union; not to hinder Germany, say, from enmeshing herself in European affairs, from embroiling herself in a war with the Soviet Union; to allow all the belligerents to sink deeply into the mire of war, to encourage them surreptitiously in this to allow them to weaken and exhaust one another; and then, when they have become weak enough, to appear on the scene with fresh strength, to appear, of course, "in the interests of peace," and to dictate conditions to the enfeebled belligerents.

. . .

Or take Germany, for instance. They let her have Austria, despite the undertaking to defend her independence; they let her have the Sudeten region; they abandoned Czechoslovakia to her fate, thereby violating all their obligations; and then they began to lie vociferously in the press about "the weakness of the Russian army," "the demoralization of the Russian air force," and "riots" in the Soviet Union, egging on the Germans to march farther east, promising them easy pickings, and prompting them: "Just start war on the Bolsheviks, and everything will be all right." . . .

Even more characteristic is the fact that certain European and American politicians and pressmen, having lost patience waiting for "the march on the Soviet Ukraine," are themselves beginning to disclose what is really behind the policy of nonintervention. They are saying quite openly, putting it down in black on white, that the Germans have cruelly "disappointed" them, for instead of marching farther east, against the Soviet Union, they have turned, you see, to the west and are demanding colonies. One might think that the districts of Czechoslovakia were yielded to Germany as the price of an undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union, but that now the Germans are refusing to meet their bills and are sending them to Hades.

Far be it from me to moralize on the policy of nonintervention, to talk of treason, treachery, and so on. It would be naive to preach morals to people who recognize no human morality. Politics are politics, as the old, case-hardened bourgeois diplomats say. It must be remarked, however, that the big and dangerous political game started by the supporters of the policy of nonintervention may end in serious fiasco for them. . . .

On March 30, the British cabinet decided to grant guarantees to Poland. The next day—two hours before this guarantee was to be presented to the House of Commons—Lord Halifax called on the Soviet ambassador to London and asked whether he could authorize Chamberlain to say that the Soviet Union supported this guarantee. This was no negotiation. The only thing the Soviet ambassador could say was that he could not speak for the Soviet Union. Whereupon Chamberlain lied to the Commons and said that the Soviet government completely understood and appreciated British policy.

But this was no guarantee of the Soviet Union. If Hitler should come to an agreement with the fascist leaders in Poland, he would still have his hands free in the east. A week later, Mussolini calmly allowed his troops to occupy Albania. On April 11, the Soviet ambassador to London told the British government that an agreement must be made to stop the aggressors. Instead, France and Great Britain granted guarantees to Romania and Greece.

On April 17, 1939, the Soviet government pointed out—

through Litvinov—that the guarantees that France and Great Britain were strewing about were of dubious value, for if Poland or Romania permitted German troops to march through their territory against the Soviet Union, then there would be nothing to hinder France and Great Britain from declaring themselves neutral and observing a policy of “non-intervention.” Litvinov demanded a real military pact, implying mutual assistance in the event of an attack.

It was not until May 8 that the Soviet government got an answer. Meanwhile the British and French governments held detailed discussions as to how they could avoid accepting the Soviet Union’s proposal. Chamberlain went on being hypocritical. The British civil servants who were finally sent to Moscow on June 12, 1939, had no mandate to make decisions about anything.

Stalin’s analysis of March 10, 1939, had turned out to be correct. What British and French diplomacy was striving to do was to unleash Hitler against the Soviet Union. In this way their ruling classes could secure their booty and retain their world power. To achieve this goal, they were prepared to sacrifice eastern Europeans and Ethiopians, Chinese and Spaniards, Czechs, Slovaks, and Albanians.

But Stalin had foreseen their plan, and drew a thick line through their calculations. With the nonaggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, “the nonaggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union put an end to the great and dangerous game started by the adherents of the policy of nonintervention . . . which ended in a great fiasco for themselves.” The Soviet Union gained a breathing space to build up its industries and the military strength to face the coming attack.

In the British propaganda brochure “The British Case,” published in 1940 with a preface by Lord Halifax, Lloyd George, head of the British Council and colonial secretary in Churchill’s government, wrote concerning the power that had occupied Albania:

Above all, the Italian genius has developed, in the characteristic

institutions, a highly authoritarian regime, which, however, threatens neither religious nor economic freedom, nor the security of other European nations. It is worthwhile to note that quite fundamental differences exist between the structure and principles of the fascist state and those of the Nazi and Soviet states. The Italian system is founded on two rocks: first, the separation of Church and state and the supremacy of the Church in matters not only of faith, but of morals; second, the rights of labor.

For those who spoke of the Albanian people and their struggle against the fascist occupants in this period of the nonaggression pact were not in London and Paris, where they hastened to declare Albania an Italian sphere of interest and again began playing the same game with Italy as the Entente had played in 1914–1915. Even so, the game led to catastrophe: the collapse of France. Italy entered the war. Then the Italian Communist Party issued an appeal against the imperialist war:

The fascist plutocracy which has been oppressing Italy for eighteen years has committed a new crime. It has flung our people into a monstrous blood-bath. It has acted with all the baseness and cynicism typical of it. Like a cowardly bandit, greedy for plunder, it has awaited a favorable moment to grab part of the spoils and has attacked the French people at a moment when the latter, betrayed by their own bourgeoisie and driven into a catastrophe, have been fighting desperately for their existence as an independent nation. . . . Today the fascists who wield power want to use our people like pawns for German imperialism. Their purpose is to turn the Italian people into executioners’ assistants against the nations that are already groaning under the yoke of their oppressors, people who have never made any claim to our possessions or our lives. . . . Our people express their condemnation of the barbarically oppressive regimes that have been forced on the Indians, the Arabs, the Negroes, and the other slaves of British imperialism, yet we do not want the British people to be strangled. We are for the freedom and independence of all peoples, but first for the freedom and independence of the peoples of Abyssinia, Libya, and Albania, who are being oppressed by Italian imperialism. These peoples’ struggles for freedom facilitates our struggle against our exploiters and oppressors.

... Today the working class is faced with the mandatory task of putting an end to this war of robbers. The Communist Party, which gives faithful expression to the feelings of the people, exhorts all working people to struggle. ...

The Albanian people could see their friends and their enemies. In this dark time the imperialist powers were their enemies. Now as in 1913, now as in 1915, now as in 1920, now as in 1924, now as in 1927, it was the oppressed people and the Marxist-Leninist parties who were their allies.

Their own ruling class had been their greatest enemy—now, as throughout the struggle for national liberation.



Enver Hoxha on the total liberation of women:

"... as long as there is no real social freedom for woman in a country, just so long is there no real freedom in that country.

"In Europe and all over the world there are innumerable philosophers and writers who talk about man's superiority over woman. They regard man as strong, brave, and fit for fighting; thus he is wiser and fated to decide and lead, while woman is by nature weak, defenseless,



timid, and therefore must be governed and led. Bourgeois theorists like Nietzsche and Freud assert that man is active and woman passive. In politics this reactionary and antibiological theory leads—as has been proved—to fascism and in sexual life to sadism.

"Women were the first slaves; they were slaves before history even knew of slavery. During this whole historical epoch—not to speak of prehistory—in Greece and Rome, in the Middle Ages and the Renais-



sance, in modern times, in the so-called highly civilized bourgeois countries, women have been and are the most oppressed, exploited, and despised of human creatures. Laws, customs, religion, the male sex have held them down, have trampled on them.

"Our mothers, our grandmothers, and our great-grandmothers have suffered under this enslavement; they have had to bear these physical and spiritual burdens on their shoulders. Now that the revolution has



been victorious, now that we are building socialism in our country, the party imposes on us the great task of completely and definitively liberating women from the chains of their bitter past. As one of the greatest tasks we have to carry out, the party imposes the complete emancipation of woman.

"I stress this because many party members have only a superficial understanding for, and sympathy with, this question, and certain others



don't understand it at all, or misunderstand it completely. Take, for instance, the question of accepting women members into the party. Certain progress has been made and certain progress is still being made; but still there is a lack of understanding of the significance, in principle, of this question. The fact is, the great majority of party members are men. How can this be, particularly after the liberation? I believe it is because certain party members do not have a clear ideological under-

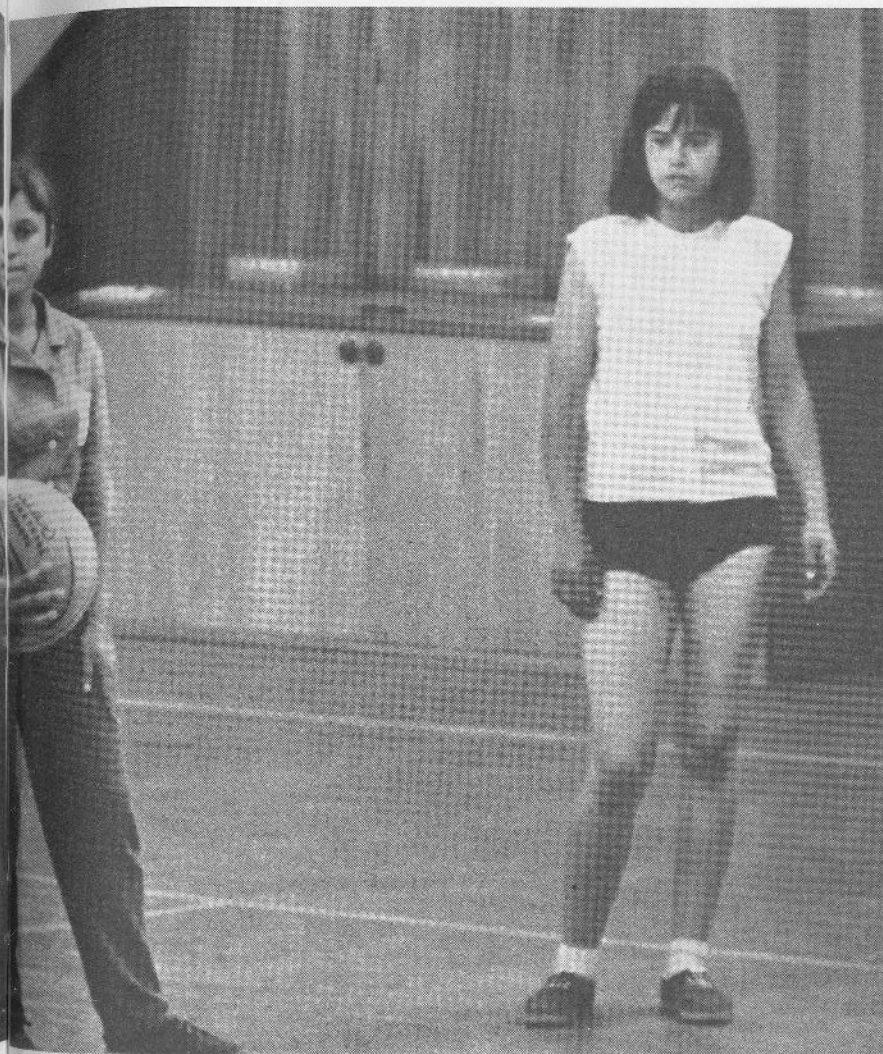


standing of woman's role in the revolution, in socialism, that in the skulls of Communists, reactionary, feudal, and bourgeois notions of men's so-called spiritual and physical superiority over women are lying hidden . . . prejudices that have been weakened, but that still exist, that it is the man's job to run the state's affairs and that it should, therefore, be men who lead the party. We must combat and eradicate these notions. . . .



"Women must really feel they are members of their own party, that they are leaders through the party, that they take an active part in working out their own party's decisions, and that they carry them out and watch over them through their active revolutionary contribution to life, to production, and to the management of concerns.

"... By abolishing capitalist exploitation and intensifying participation in production, we have already achieved great successes in emanci-



pating women. [They] are taking an ever more active part in running the country's affairs, in running industry, education, and culture. Lenin's instruction that 'every cook should learn how to run the state' is now being carried out in our party's daily work.

"... The party must understand that women's mass participation in production, in running the economy and the state's affairs ... is not only a progressive economic factor of great importance, but at the same

time is of decisive ideological, political, and cultural importance.

"Marx says: 'Private property has made us so stupid and onesided that a thing only becomes *ours* when we own it, that is, when it exists as capital for us or is immediately possessed, eaten, drunk, worn on our body, inhabited by us, in a word: when it is *used up*.' And he goes on: 'In the place of *all* physical and spiritual senses stands the sense which implies that all these senses have been alienated; the sense of having.'



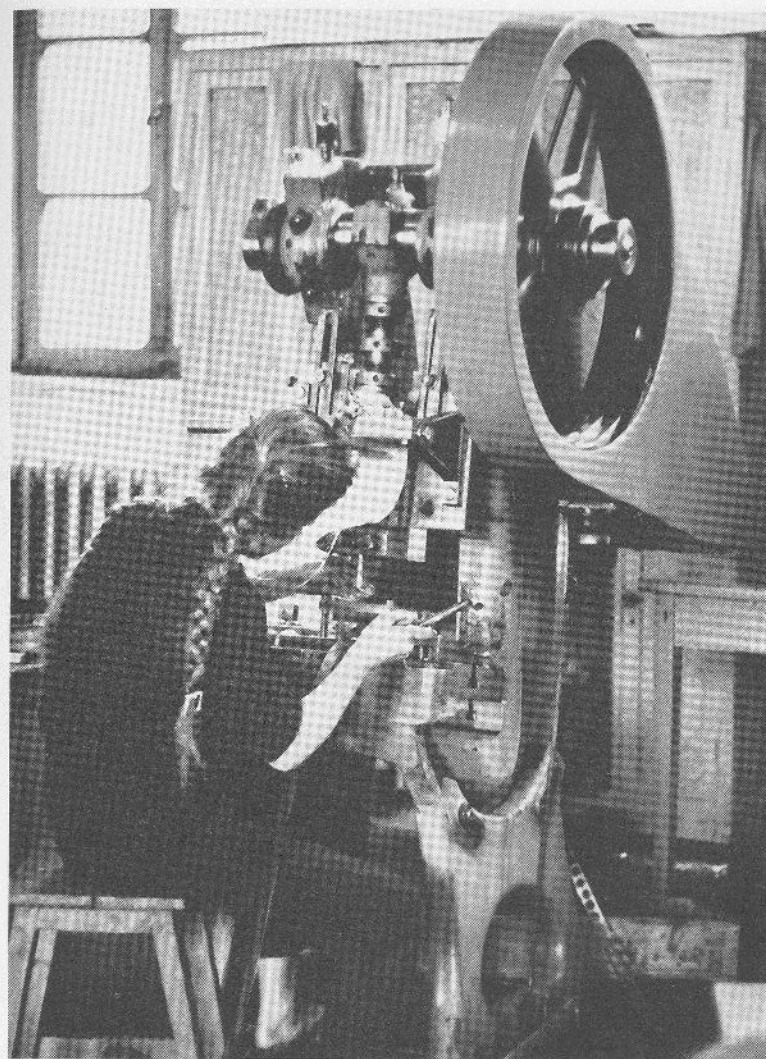
"It is just in this area, the area of the senses and feelings of private personal ownership that Marx is speaking of, that we still have not put our house in order—it is work that will demand great and protracted effort on our part. . . . Engels says that the love-marriage is moral and that only where love is, is marriage. . . . It must be admitted that many erroneous and reactionary notions about love appear among us. Love is regarded as something shameful, forbidden, and abnormal. Often, if not



always, love is branded as something immoral, 'which leads women into prostitution and men into degeneration.' These are erroneous notions. If there is one thing that has nothing to do with prostitution, it is real love. There is no love in prostitution. Fortunately, our country has been spared the plague of prostitution; but we must combat the least signs of it. They can appear if we have an erroneous anti-Marxist-Leninist attitude to the question of love and marriage, if we do not combat,



in practice and theory, the bourgeois and idealist views in these questions. Our country has been plagued by marriage-by-violence, by the traditional Muhammadan laws of slavery and polygamy, the laws of Catholicism, of the Vatican, and this has not only enslaved and devaluated women, but has also exposed them to spiritual torture. . . . Even if many prejudices have been overcome, we would be making a mistake if we thought we had solved everything, that we have no cause for worry,



and that the weaknesses will right themselves in time. . . . Despite socialist construction, despite the great economic, political, ideological, cultural, and other progress in our country, there still exist among the people—and even among Communists—erroneous patriarchal notions, and—what is worse—child marriage and the purchase of brides continue. It was this that awakened us and led us to see that we could no longer neglect such important, and at the same time serious, questions. Mar-



riage is an act, a social fact, and must not be seen as a philosophical category. Yet this social act has its own philosophy, both in our society and in the bourgeoisie's.

"Women in our society enjoy all rights. . . . But what happens in daily life? . . . She is more tolerant toward her husband than he is toward her. We come up with every possible explanation of this, but we forget one explanation, a habit, a tradition. Namely, that the woman is



afraid of being divorced and that if she is, then she automatically ends up among those women who cannot get a new husband, while the divorced husband finds it easier to find a new wife. He often looks among younger women. This is one of the many reasons—an important reason—that women, without realizing it, unconsciously, without reasoning, submit to their fate. It is not written down anywhere, but it is hard to abolish. We have a great work to carry out.



"Among certain intellectuals there is the idea that they should not marry educated women. . . . A petty-bourgeois notion of keeping one's wife dependent, being superior oneself, taking her into the house to do the housework. . . . Such views must be combated.

"Future generations in our country will be completely liberated from the many prejudices and leftover notions under which our generation has suffered."

NOT JUST A KING

It was June 13, 1969. We had come from Shkodra, had followed the Mati River into the countryside, passing power stations, and were sitting on the mountain north of Burreli, drinking beer with the people from the agricultural cooperative in Bugajet. It was hot. We sat in the shade under the trees and Drita Kazhani, a woman teacher, sang songs written by Sabri Alia. Sabri Alia was the best musician in the area. He was playing the accordion.

This was the place Ahmed Zogu had come from. Up here on the hill he had had a summer house. A cool wind was blowing over the mountains. The house had been demolished.

"We've used the stones for the terraces."

Once, down at Burreli, Ahmed Zogu had opened a school. A police school. At that time there were 13 schools with a total of 619 pupils in the whole region. Now there are 101 schools with a total of 400 teachers and 10,500 pupils.

"It was in June 1942 that we formed our first partisan group here.

"In 1943 the Italians sent up a punitive expedition. They burned down villages. They burned 1,210 houses in this district.

"In 1954 we formed an agricultural collective. At that time it was rather difficult. The reactionaries said: 'We'll soon be liberated.' They tried to scare the peasants. But we won. The last time the counterrevolutionaries tried anything was in 1956. They were deviationists. Declassed elements. We took them. They didn't have time to do much damage. There weren't many of them. The landlords had gone and there were only forty kulaks in the whole district of sixty villages.

"Now 70 percent of all villages are linked by road. And every second agricultural collective has its own motorized transport."

We drink beer in the shade, lie on the grass, and talk; and only a few stones remain of Ahmed Zogu's house, and that time is long ago.

And yet:

It wasn't just Ahmed Zogu who fled with the state's funds. The entire class he belonged to had betrayed the country. To keep their power and privileges, they had gone over to the Italian fascists—just as they had earlier gone over to any other occupying power. In the revolution of 1924 the people had not done what *Drita* said they should: they hadn't torn up the tree by the roots, and the feudal class proved to be the death of Albania.

To preserve their personal privileges, they had let Italy colonize the country. Since they didn't rely on themselves to keep their power, they put their faith in foreigners. In 1938, Italy had more than 280 million golden francs invested in Albania. The Italians were the masters of the land. When Mussolini decided to occupy Albania—a decision he made because he was getting worried that his Axis partner Hitler might begin to show an interest in the Adriatic—this feudal class refused to defend itself. To give the people weapons and let the people defend themselves might be a threat to the feudal lords' property. Rather the Italians, then! The Albanian feudal class shared with the French bourgeoisie the view that a foreign occupation was better than arming their own people. A foreign occupation did not change property relations; its only inconvenience from the point of view of the ruling classes was that the foreign occupiers wanted to share in the profits extorted from the people. But rather share the profits than have none at all!

Since the victory of the counterrevolution in 1924, Albania had been a semi-colony, ruled by a corrupt feudal class with the help of the gendarmes in the interests of foreign capital.

Fascist Italy controlled Albania's economy. Each attempt at

an excursion in foreign policy—such as the attempt to make contact with Paris in 1934—turned out both to be a way of changing masters (France had nothing against succeeding Italy as long as it didn't have to pay for it and could make enough profit) and, as a policy, impossible. The ruling class in Albania was incapable of having any policy of its own, nor could it defend the country's independence. Any such policy would have required the support of the people, and although the people—as Ahmed Zogu and all his class-brothers realized—would support a policy aimed at national independence—they wished for nothing better—such support for the ruling feudal class would have been the support a man gets from the rope that hangs him.

Albania was independent in the way in which countries in the United States' sphere of influence were independent. It was a colony where the colonizer did not need to provide anything but instructors for the gendarmerie and the native upper class provided the gendarmes themselves. During those years Albania strikingly resembled many present-day countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

When Italy occupied the country, it did not do so because Italian imperialism was dissatisfied with the way in which Ahmed Zogu was running the country for them; it was a military action that secured the Italian imperialists' interests in competition with German imperialism. It also brought military glory. It also suited the Vatican.

In the year 1934–1935, when Ahmed Zogu took 3.7 percent of the national budget for his own use, 41.4 percent was going to the armed forces—to keep the people in order—and 2.4 percent to state investment in agriculture and industry. Large sections of the population were unemployed. The civil servants (the lower ones) had to wait six months to get their salaries paid, and Ahmed Zogu was a familiar figure in the pages of western European women's magazines, well known for his efforts to develop his little Balkan country.

All political parties were forbidden, freedom of the press had been abolished, there was no workers' protective legislation, there was no social insurance, the great Italian estates

drove tens of thousands of peasants off their land. In the whole of Albania, in 1938, there were only three hundred light industrial plants. The working class numbered fifteen thousand individuals. If an Albanian and a foreigner worked side by side, the foreigner got more pay than the Albanian. In the midst of all this, priests, gendarmes, and foreign experts wandered about. Albania was being developed by foreign capital.

"What was Burelli? A village with ten houses, two shops, one prison, a police school, and a café. What is it now? A town with schools and hospitals and industry."

That is correct. Burelli is a town. A pleasant town where people are walking about in the evening. But the road to this pleasant quiet evening was a long one for those slow-walking, loud-speaking, laughing people.

THE POSSIBILITY OF THE NECESSARY

Again and again since March 2, 1444, when the princes gathered in Lesh cathedral and Skanderbeg was elected commander-in-chief, the foundation of an Albanian state had come close to realization.

At various points in time, the Albanian people had been no more than a step away from achieving their national independence. There had been reasons for these defeats. I have tried to give an account of them. In some cases the reasons lay outside Albania. Despite all resistance, the Osman military machine was too powerful for the Albanians—and Venetian and papal diplomacy was about as much help to the Albanians then as the British and French were in the twentieth century.

Now the Italian fascists were ruling Albania. And when the Albanian feudal lords acclaimed the little Italian king their master, and when the gaudy Italian officers talked about their eternal mission in Albania, the national destitution seemed to be total.

Yet it was out of this situation that Albania won its national independence. It won in a war of national liberation that at the same time was a war of social liberation. Not until the struggle had led to the expulsion of the foreign occupiers and to the destruction of the native feudal class could Albania achieve its national independence.

The bourgeois democrats had not been able to carry out this task. Fan Noli had not even been able—like Kemal Atatürk in Turkey—to carry his revolution to victory and in this victory show that the bourgeois democrats were able to

carry out even nominal reforms. Fan Noli was driven out by the armed counterrevolution, supported from abroad.

Many of the questions being posed in various countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America today have already been answered in the history of Albania.

(1) *National independence.* The bourgeoisie was too little developed—nor could it develop far enough under imperialism—to be able to lead the country and people to national independence.

(2) *Redistribution of the land.* A revolutionary redistribution was clearly a fundamental requirement, because as long as the feudal class had not been crushed (torn up by the roots, as Drita wrote in 1924), it would infallibly betray the people to the foreign imperialists in order to secure possession of the land for itself.

(3) *The social revolution as the only possibility of national independence.* "Give the worker back his land, which he has watered with his sweat and blood, and feudalism is lost," wrote Drita.

(4) *Foreign imperialism.* Italian imperialism had "developed" Albania: it had built strategic roads and it had built harbors and it had taken raw materials from Albanian soil and the Albanian mountains. To do this it had set up a development company, SVEA, but the poverty and corruption had only grown worse.

(5) *Great powers and "international organs."* Their game had been simple and easy to grasp. For the imperialist great powers, Albania had been booty. When they spoke (as the British did in 1920) about Albania being "free," they had meant free for them to plunder. The international organs included the stock exchange, where the larger and smaller imperialists powers bargained and dealt in the booty.

(6) *Bourgeois democracy as the opening move in the counterrevolution.* When Fan Noli's government postponed the revolutionary measures while waiting for parliament to be elected and laws to be passed, the counterrevolution was given its chance. When the revolution hesitated to use force,

the counterrevolution, which had never hesitated to, was victorious.

On November 28, 1939, the people of Tirana demonstrated against the occupiers. It was the twenty-seventh anniversary of Albania's declaration of independence. The slogans were:

"Long live free Albania!"

"Freedom or death!"

It was the Communist youth who led this demonstration. The force that was to be capable of uniting the national and the social liberation, and that was to found the new Albania began to manifest itself.

WHO FOUNDED ALBANIA'S COMMUNIST PARTY

This question is not unimportant. When one reads the works of bourgeois specialists, it seems as if the Communist Party of Albania was formed by "Yugoslavs."

The Albanian party had itself been founded by Yugoslav emissaries who had merged several isolated groups of Communist believers.

When emissaries of the Yugoslav Communist partisans, headed by Popović and Dušan Mugoša, arrived in Albania in 1941, in accordance with Tito's orders, to organize a Communist party . . . *

As it happens, it isn't that easy to "organize a Communist Party." Only in a special sense of the word is "political work" the same as maneuvers and manipulations. Griffith's account of the Albanian partisans' victory ascribes to them superhuman—not to say divine—Machiavellian gifts:

By 1944, under Yugoslav direction, they had manipulated most of their internal foes into collaboration with the Germans, outmaneuvered the British, and successfully filled the power vacuum in Albania left by the Nazi defeat.

This is a view of history that is as exciting as a detective story. But it overlooks the essential thing. There was an Albanian people. A people who acted, and acted on thoroughly rational grounds.

* The first quotation is from R. V. Burks, *The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961); the second is from William E. Griffith, *Albania and the Sino-Soviet Rift* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1963).

The first and simplest answer is that it was the Albanian people who were fighting, and it was Albanian Communists who founded the Albanian Communist Party on November 8, 1941. On that day the various Communist groups in the country united, elected a provisional central committee, and adopted a declaration.

But no man is an island, and Albanian Communism is not a purely Albanian phenomenon that sprouted in the Albanian mountains. And it is at this precise point that the Yugoslavs have inserted their propaganda. I shall come back to the Yugoslav question. Now for just a few texts which have been fundamental to the picture of Albania given in bourgeois literature:

In 1939 the Yugoslavian Communist Party's Central Committee sent comrade Miladin Popović from Kossova to Albania to help the Albanian comrades to establish and strengthen the Communist Party of Albania. At the beginning of the war, comrade Dušan Mugoša was also sent to Albania, where he collaborated with Albania. (Tito, July 21, 1948)

After its appeal to the Albanian patriots, the National Liberation Movement's leadership in Yugoslavia sent direct help to the Albanian people in 1941 in order to create their liberation movement, for their struggle against the fascist invasion and for their survival and national independence.

By using the experiences and following the example of the Yugoslav people's National Liberation Struggle and Revolution, the Albanian People's Liberation Movement [capitals as in the original text—JM] was developed and strengthened by daily help from the Yugoslav leaders. (A Yugoslav government note of November 12, 1949)

One should bear in mind that this is written after the Cominform resolution on Yugoslavia and after relations between Albania and Yugoslavia had become very bad. The tone of these texts, too, is thoroughly chauvinistic: the Albanians are treated as backward, in need of guidance. Even if we overlook this tone, the fact remains that representatives of the Yugoslav Communist Party were sent to Albania and

participated in the work—from which it follows that the Albanian Communist Party must be a Yugoslav creation!

No, the peculiar thing about these documents is that in 1948 the old Comintern worker “Walter” (Tito) suddenly seemed to have forgotten that the Comintern existed. The Yugoslav comrades were not sent to Albania as “Yugoslavs,” they were sent as Communists. And Tito did not give personal instructions about work in other countries; he passed on instructions from the Comintern. On September 22, 1942, he wrote in the name of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party to the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party:

To the Central Committee of the fraternal Albanian Communist Party

Dear comrades,

... the reasons your delegate has stayed so long with us are as follows: first, the documents had to be translated into our language, which only he could do. Second, because I myself, on the basis of these documents, sent a number of messages to the Comintern, to which I am awaiting answers. Third, because we saw to it that your delegate was given an opportunity to visit certain of our units and study the military structure. In your name we have requested authorization from the Comintern to hold the Albanian Communist Party's conference and elect a regular central committee. Yesterday the Comintern replied at last and authorized this ...

On April 13, 1943, the following message was sent by radio to the Comintern:

We are in touch with the Albanian comrades. Three instructors from our party are there. The new central committee has been set up. The liquidation of Trotskyists and factions within the party has been crowned with success. At the end of March, the Albanian party congress was held, but as yet we have no report. We have sent various documents about the party and the partisans. At present the Albanian comrades are organizing resistance against the Italian occupiers.

In December:

In December and January, extensive anti-Italian manifestations took place at Shkodra and Tirana. A number of people were killed. April 13, 1943, Walter. (“Walter” is Tito)

In December 1942, the letter of September 22 arrived in Albania. It was wartime and communications were difficult. But this was not a private letter from the “Yugoslav” Tito; it was a letter containing the Comintern's directives for the national war of liberation, a letter that recognized the Albanian Communist Party as a section of the Communist International, and it was on the basis of this letter that the Albanian Communist Party called its conference in March 1943 and elected its central committee. The man chosen as secretary-general was Enver Hoxha. The conference sent its greetings to the Comintern:

No power on earth will be able to prevail on our party to betray the great ideals of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, the great ideals of the Communist International.

The Communist Party of Albania was formed as a section of the Communist International—not by “Tito.” And the directives that the Comintern sent via Tito were not decisions on matters of detail or directives on questions of detail. They concerned the general political line to be followed; they expressed the Communist world party's cumulative experience.

Nor did the Comintern's work in contributing to the formation of a Communist party in Albania begin in 1939. As early as 1915 Dimitrov had reported on the necessity of forming a social-democratic party on a revolutionary basis in Albania. In 1924, Albanians who had emigrated after the success of the counterrevolution began to make contact with the Comintern and to collaborate with it. In 1928, the Albanian Communist Group was formed in the Soviet Union, and that same year the Balkan Communist Federation's Eighth Conference entrusted the Albanian Communists with the work of preparing the formation of Communist groups in Albania. At the Comintern's Sixth World Congress in 1928, Georgi Dimitrov reported on these preparations.

The first organized group within Albania was formed in

1929 at Korca. Ali Kelmendi was sent from the Albanian Communist Group in the Soviet Union to do illegal work in Albania during the dictatorship of Ahmed Zogu. He organized Communist cells and made contact with the group at Korca. In 1933 the first workers' organization in Albania, Puna, was formed. It attracted workers and small master-builders who were being exploited by entrepreneurs. It had five hundred members and was led by Communists. To avoid police persecution, Puna was called a nonpolitical organization. In the most difficult of circumstances, the Albanian Communists had begun to build up both a legal and an illegal apparatus.

They led the strike movements, they tried to organize more trade unions, they educated themselves. In 1935, Riza Cerova returned from the Soviet Union. He fell in August of that same year while taking part in the rising against Ahmed Zogu that was led by the bourgeoisie. The Communists who took part in this rising had been all too conscious of its weaknesses and the poor prospects of its success, yet they had regarded it as worthwhile. Ali Kelmendi reported to the Comintern:

This was the Albanian Communists' baptism of fire, and they stood this test with honor and showed themselves to be worthy brothers to the Communists of other countries.

Before Riza Cerova fell, he wrote to his family; the people, he wrote, could only gain their freedom after the exploiting classes had been overthrown.

The rising scared Ahmed Zogu and he was forced to agree to certain reforms. At the same time, the strike movement grew. A semi-legal trade union was built in the oil fields. When the workers went on strike for better living conditions, Ahmed Zogu sent his gendarmes to crush them. Sixty workers were imprisoned and three hundred were deported. In 1936 the demonstrations grew. Clashes with the gendarmerie became steadily more embittered. In December 1936, Ali Kelmendi reported about the work in Albania at a meeting for Albanian Communist activists that the Balkan

section of the Comintern had organized in Moscow to analyze the Albanian situation and the tasks imposed by the Comintern's Sixth World Congress. Our task, said Ali Kelmendi in his report, must be to form an organized center in Albania, whose task would be, "to strengthen and lead the existing Communist groups, to organize the Communist movement throughout Albania, and to summon a constituent congress for the Albanian Communist Party."

The meeting discussed his report and then made certain decisions. These were confirmed by the Comintern and reached the Communist group in Korca in the autumn of 1937. The old cells were to be dissolved—they had given rise to sectarian tendencies—the Communists were to do mass work in legal and semi-legal organizations. There was resistance to this line: many Communists were used to the cells and found it hard to abandon that way of working. But the new line was carried through and Communists worked in all organizations—from the chamber of commerce to school children's organizations. In the municipal elections at Korca, the Communists collaborated with the democratic elements, and the democratic block won 86 percent of the vote. The newly elected municipal council was led by Communists and carried through a series of reforms. In September 1938 the Communist group at Korca announced:

We must work wherever people gather, in the state organizations, in schools, in clubs, in religious congregations, in women's clubs, everywhere. . . . Power lies with the people; without the masses we are only a handful of individuals.

There were conflicts between the various Communist groups in the country. These conflicts had made the work more difficult.

Enver Hoxha had left the lycée at Korca in 1930 to study in France. There he became a Communist. He returned to Albania in 1936 and began working as a teacher, first in Tirana and then in Korca. He became a member of the Communist group at Korca. He worked actively there. Dismissed from his job as a teacher after the occupation, he went to

Tirana, where he did political work and built up the resistance movement. The occupation made it more and more imperative to create a unified Communist Party. In the spring the armed struggle began, led by Myslim Peza. In discussions with Enver Hoxha, Myslim Peza accepted Communists in his force. On April 15, 1944, Enver Hoxha said:

Our struggle did not begin after the Soviet Union had come into the war; but the Soviet Union's participation in the war gave our people a feeling that the blood they had sacrificed had not been sacrificed in vain.

During the struggle with the occupiers, the various Communist groups were united. On October 28, 1941—the anniversary of the fascist “March on Rome”—the Communists organized a mass demonstration against the occupiers in Tirana. This demonstration showed how utterly hollow the power of the Italians and the feudal lords was. Enver Hoxha had organized the demonstration and led it in person. The fascist authorities did not succeed in imprisoning him—but they condemned him to death “in absentia.”

Between November 8 and November 14, 1941, representatives of the Communist groups met at Tirana. To overcome their old conflicts, it was decided that no one who had held a leading position in any of the groups should be elected to the new government.

The party was organized as a Communist Party. Its strategic goal was:

To fight for the Albanian people's national independence and for the people's democratic government in an Albania that has been liberated from fascism.

Lessons learned from the defeat of 1924 had taught that the feudal classes were the imperialists' main support. The chief strength lay in the workers and peasants, so it was decided “to set up military units and spread them among the working masses in the towns and in the countryside.” The party should “unite itself with all the patriots who really want a free Albania, with all honest Albanians who wish to

fight against fascism.” To liberate the country it should “prepare the people politically and militarily to take part in a general armed rising which unites all the patriotic and anti-fascist forces in the struggle.”

The party should also “promote love for the Soviet Union [and] promote love and close comradeship in arms between the Albanian people and the Balkan peoples, especially the Serbian, the Greek, the Montenegrin, and the Macedonian peoples. . . .”

In this way the Communist Party of Albania was formed, and it was after studying these documents and discussing the new party's Central Committee that the Comintern asked Tito to make contact with the new party, inform it that it had been recognized as the Communist Party of Albania (a section of the Communist International) and give political directives and advice. The Yugoslav Communists did their duty as Communists—members of a world party—but they were not—as it may seem from their later statements—the general staff of this world party.

PATRIOTS, OCCUPANTS, AND "PATRIOTS"

It was mid-September 1968. We'd arrived in Tirana. Out in the countryside we had met marching troops. They weren't doing the goose-step; they were armed Albanians marching up into the mountains in close formation. The officers wore no indication of rank.

In the night we heard trampling footsteps outside the hotel. We went out. The dark street was full of soldiers, rank on rank, marching out of town. They were marching silently in the darkness up into the mountains.

The Soviet Union had attacked Czechoslovakia; Albania had left the Warsaw Pact. Meetings were being held all over the country. Weapons were being distributed to the people and the soldiers were marching out of Tirana to take up their positions in the mountains. The country had mobilized.

Next day they asked Gun not to take any photos in the mountains.

"They won't attack this time, I'm sure. But one never knows."

On September 12, 1968, Mehmet Shehu, chairman of the Presidential Council, spoke in the Popular Assembly of the People's Republic of Albania. He proposed that the People's Republic of Albania leave the Warsaw Pact.

Mehmet Shehu was a veteran of the International Brigade in Spain, had led the partisans at Mallakstra, and on August 15, 1943, had been appointed commandant of the First Shock Brigade. It was he who had led the fighting for Tirana in November 1944, when more than twenty thousand German occupiers fell before the First Shock Brigade could

liberate the town on November 17, after nineteen days of fighting.

Now he spoke to the National Assembly in the name of the government and the Central Committee:

So, our party and our government have long been warning the member countries of the Warsaw Pact that the revisionist clique in the Soviet Union will try to use this pact as an instrument for their chauvinist great-power policies and that this will place the Warsaw Pact in the service of the policy of collaboration between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Experience has confirmed these objective predictions of our party and our government. The whole world can now see, in this barbaric attack by the Soviet revisionists and their lackeys, members of the Warsaw Pact, against the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Czechoslovak people. . . . The attack has been executed in the name of the Warsaw Pact in the most perfect manner. It is fascist aggression. In the most terrible way, the Soviet revisionists' and their lackeys' attack on Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak people has besmirched the Soviet Union's and the Soviet people's, and the Soviet soldiers' glory and reputation. During World War II Stalin's Soviet soldiers came to Czechoslovakia as liberators, but now—when they are blindly following the orders of the revisionist Brezhnev-Khrushchev clique—the Soviet soldiers appear to the Czechoslovak people as occupiers. . . . What terrible and tragic changes since the death of the great Stalin! . . . Why do the United States imperialists accept the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact? Because the world was long ago divided into spheres of influence! Czechoslovakia belongs to the sphere of the Soviet revisionists. . . . Today it is the historic duty of all the peoples of the world to rise, unite, and fight uncompromisingly to the end against this alliance of the United States and the Soviet Union to dominate the world. . . . I ask you, comrade deputies, to unanimously approve the proposal that the People's Republic of Albania shall leave the Warsaw Pact. . . .

This policy not only agreed with the Albanian people's assessment of the cowardly attack on Czechoslovakia; it would also secure Albania's independence. This policy was based upon the fact that the people of Albania bear arms:

It is not only the armed forces which defend our socialist fatherland; it is the entire people under arms. Men and women, young and old.

Chinese support is important, but crucial to Albania's defense is that the entire Albanian people are armed, have weapons. There are weapons in every village. Ten minutes after the alarm sounds, the entire population of a village must be ready for combat. There has never been any shortage of weapons in Albania, but never have the people been as armed as they are today.

It is often said that Albania is a "Stalinist" country. Well, that depends on what one means by Stalinist. Husak would not dream of distributing weapons to Czech and Slovak youth. He would not survive many hours if he did. Kadar would not distribute automatics and submachine guns in the villages of Hungary. Brezhnev would not hand out hand grenades to Soviet students.

Albania is a poor country. It faces many difficulties. But a country where the entire people are armed and where there is live ammunition in every cottage can not be ruled by a little clique against the people's will. This is a very simple truth. Husak, Kadar, Brezhnev appreciate it perfectly.

The Liberation Army that was formed during the war was a political army, a democratic army. Its discipline was conscious discipline. The commander and the political commissar each had duties, but they were not "superiors" in the ordinary sense. All military operations, all appointments, all cadres, were discussed by the units. Leaders are necessary, and so are orders; but these leaders were able to lead because they were leading a democratic army in which all political and social questions were discussed and where no one was "above politics."

During the war the fascists and the occupiers tried to create a political base for themselves in Albania with propaganda about "Greater Albania," "ethnic Albania." This "ethnic" Albania was the Albanian patriots' demand from the nineteenth century, from 1912, from 1920. As Lenin

pointed out, there is no popular democratic demand which in some given situation cannot be misused in the interests of the reaction. To combat this notion and to establish a fraternal collaboration with the Serbian, Montenegrin, Macedonian, and Greek patriots was one of the main political tasks in the war of national liberation. The national questions were class questions; after the war the national questions would be solved in a correct way in a liberated Balkans, whose liberation from the occupying powers would also lay the foundations for social liberation.

I've written that the "whole people" are armed. This is true if by the whole people one means the whole working people. It is not true if by the whole people one also means reactionary elements, the old feudal lords and their lackeys. They are not armed. They have no power. It is the working people—the overwhelming majority—who are armed, and this majority has power and weapons and is prepared to use them if the former ruling class—the small minority—should try again to take back "their" property and power. The Albanian people have not learned this merely from theoretical discussions; they have learned it through costly experience. Both in 1924 and during the war.

When the Italian fascists occupied Albania, the Albanian feudal lords and the ruling class in Albania collaborated with the occupiers. But things turned out badly for Mussolini. When he became dangerous to the Italian bourgeoisie, they overthrew him and put out feelers to Great Britain and the United States. The resistance to Mussolini was growing into a social revolution. The Italian bourgeoisie wanted peace. Not because it was peaceful, but because the blackshirts could no longer suppress the Italian people. The Italian bourgeoisie needed help—as the French bourgeoisie had needed help in 1940.

There was one difference. A crucial difference. Great Britain and the United States were at war with fascist Germany. It had been necessary to crush Hitlerism in order to liberate the peoples of Europe. But the Italian Communists only saw this difference; they did not see the similar-

ities with 1940, nor did they clearly see Great Britain's and the United States' class interest in the war, and they handed over their weapons and became "legal." The Italian people are suffering for that even today, and this is why people are starving in southern Italy today.

In Albania things turned out differently.

The armistice between Italy and the allies came on October 8, 1943. On September 10, Ribbentrop telephoned to Herman Neubacher in Belgrade and told him that "der Führer" desired "an Albania independent on its own initiative."

The next day Neubacher flew to Albania:

The situation was not particularly confused. Southern Albania was partly in the hands of the Communist partisans. Against them the Italians had had but little success. This was why, even before the revolution, a German division had been quartered in Elbasani. These partisans were our certain guerrilla opponents in the time to come.

The nationalistic fighters who had gone into the forests against the Italian occupation under the law of the main enemy could not be dangerous to us. For them—as in Yugoslavia and Greece—the Communists were the main enemy. . . . the "Balli Kombetar" people [Balli Kombetar was the National Front] never fought against our troops. They withdrew or turned against the partisans in the south. Only Abbas Kupa, who regarded himself as King Ahmed Zogu's governor, remained with—as it was said—rather more than a thousand supporters in the district between Tirana and Shkodra, and with him, too, were the British liaison officers. We left him in peace and he us. He had a good reputation in the country and the constitutional assembly [the German quisling government—JM] sent him a solemn greeting in the forests in October 1943—they did us no harm.

Now the great landowners' quisling government declared "Great Albania" independent. This quisling government helped the German occupiers to combat the partisans and:

. . . Fiqri Dino . . . had good communications with Abbas Kupa, at whose headquarters the British were. At the beginning of his candidacy Fiqri Dino had told me that he could only take over

the government if Germany supplied two mountain divisions (with tanks). I am still convinced that this demand had its source in Abbas Kupa, who had obviously consulted with his British liaison officers as to how—before the German troops withdrew, which could not take long—they could come into possession of an arsenal of weapons with which they could resist the red partisans' enterprise. This view of mine was confirmed by the attempts made by the last head of the intelligence service in Albania to negotiate. He wanted to negotiate with us on account of our withdrawal from the Balkans, and since the war was lost for Germany anyway, he wanted the German troops to remain in Albania and maintain their bases and not hand over weapons to the population until we "with honor" could be transported away as prisoners of war. Similar proposals came through the secret service concerning one of our divisions (General Lanz) who was in northern Greece. . . . This inevitable development of the oppositions between the nationalist and Communist resistance movements, in Greece and Albania too, had led to the nationalist partisans being obliged to cease their active struggle against the occupying troops. The British liaison staff's efforts to get the two groups to merge remained fruitless. On Yugoslav soil these efforts were made in full seriousness; in Greece and Albania, on the contrary, with little emphasis. For Britain and its short route to India it was quite a different matter if the northern Balkans or the Aegean Sea became Bolshevik. The narrow straits of Otranto, where Albania lay and where the northern Adriatic could be closed off by anyone who commanded them, was still of importance to the British Mediterranean fleet. This is why the later passivity that the Greek nationalist leader Napoleon Zervas ("Edes") and, in Albania, the Zogist Abbas Kupa, showed, did not lead to conflict with their British friends, while in Serbia Draza Mihajlovic's behavior led to conflict. He was also embittered at the active help given by the British to Tito's partisans. . . . I have already described how the British at the beginning of our withdrawal from the Balkans and Greece tried to make contact with the German side. There was great and justifiable anxiety on the British part that the German troops' retreat from this region could lead to the Communists coming to power. This is why the British, when the German forces began to withdraw from the Greek islands and the Greek mainland, had not effectively disturbed operations, since they did not want to facilitate the work

of the red partisans. Then British "General Attika" Scobie also sought a conversation . . . with me. In the German headquarters I did everything I could to bring about such a meeting . . . but my request was immediately turned down. The British prognosis was correct. . . . In Yugoslavia the Western powers let things go their own way. There Tito had become the man of this crucial moment and the Adriatic was a problem of second rank. . . .

At the same time that the British were negotiating in this way with the Germans, through Fiqri Dino—the quisling—and that Abbas Kupa was trying to obtain German tanks to use against the partisans, the Allied supreme command in the Mediterranean sent a message to Enver Hoxha saying, ". . . do your utmost to ensure that your forces do not behave in a hostile manner toward the troops of Abbas Kupa."

In September 1944, Colonel Palmer, head of the British Mission to Albania, requested permission for British special units to land anywhere they wanted in Albania. But the Albanians had already begun an all-out attack on the Germans, and found this "help" superfluous. Colonel Palmer was given permission to land eighteen people.

When the British tried a landing in Albania, Enver Hoxha welcomed them as friends and major allies—and declared that if the troops did not immediately leave Albanian territory, they would be regarded as foreign troops on Albanian soil and be driven out by force of arms.

It was the Soviet army's great victories over the German troops that were decisive for the war in Europe and that made possible the liberation of Albania; but Albania itself was freed entirely by Albanian forces, and these forces pursued the beaten German troops into Yugoslavia and, at the request of the Yugoslav Liberation Army, the fifth and sixth Albanian divisions contributed to the liberation of Yugoslavia from the Germans.

The war of liberation was a national war, a patriotic war. But the Albanian people had learned the lessons of history and knew how to distinguish between friend and foe. The old ruling classes were ready to collaborate with any foreign army of occupation whatever, Italian, German, or British, as

long as they could keep their class privileges. And in the choice between German occupying administrators and the red partisans, the British did not hesitate. For them, too, it was a question of the war's class character.

WHY WAS XOXE CONDEMNED TO DEATH?

On June 10, 1949, Radio Tirana announced that Koci Xoxe, ex-major general, former vice-president and minister of the interior in the People's Republic of Albania, former organizational secretary in the Communist Party of Albania, had been condemned to death for high treason against Albania in the service of the Yugoslavs. On June 13 Radio Tirana announced that the sentence had been carried out and that Koci Xoxe had been shot by a firing squad.

What had happened? Had this been a witch-hunt? A trial in appearance only? Some private settlement of accounts? Or had there really been some grounds for it? And what were the grounds?

A year earlier, on July 1, 1948, a communiqué from the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party was published in Tirana. In it we read, among other things:

The Albanian Communist Party Central Committee supports unanimously and completely the resolution of the Communist Parties' Information Bureau. . . . The leaders of Yugoslavia's Communist Party Central Committee have tried to transform [our] fatherland into a colony of their own . . . to destroy our country's and our party's independence.

The same day the foreign ministry of the People's Republic of Albania presented a note to the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia's delegation in Tirana. In this note the People's Republic of Albania declared that it was breaking all economic agreements, conventions, and protocols between itself and the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia. The note gave as the reasons:

The Yugoslav government has tried to take over the administration of our country's economy, with the result that the political administration has been taken over; in other words, the People's Republic of Albania has lost its independence and autonomy. While hiding behind such demagogic phrases as "transition to socialism," "our two countries' alliance," and while taking advantage of the great faith the Albanian people and their government have had for their brothers, the people of Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav government has changed both the principles and the practice of coordinating economic planning and has brutally carried through a policy of domination in our country, an economic policy of colonial exploitation.

The agreements that Albania annulled were twenty-five in number. They touched on all aspects of Albanian economic life. Through these, the Yugoslav government had acquired total control over Albania. Albania's struggle for its national independence was long and troublesome—July 1, 1948, is one of its important dates.

The Yugoslav reaction came in the form of a note on July 3. The tone of this note says much about the Yugoslav government's view of Albanian independence:

In the history of diplomacy there is nothing to correspond to such a brutal and one-sided breach of some of its treaties by a country that is acting totally against its own interests while churlishly insulting the other party. Our military specialists are thrown out of Albania in a hostile manner and our army and its leaders are insulted in the most vulgar fashion.

Today—twenty-two years later—it is obvious to everyone that Albania, at that time, was being turned into a Yugoslav province; that the Greater Serbian dreams from the days of the Balkan War and the period between the wars were on the way to being realized. The explanation that the Yugoslav government disseminated and the one that was for a long time repeated in various quarters has turned out—in the light of history—to be incorrect:

But in one night, July 1, 1948, after the publication of the infamous Cominform resolution, the Albanian government uni-

laterally broke. . . . On orders from certain leaders in the Soviet Union, the Albanian government began to . . . In this way the Albanian government was transformed into an instrument. . . . (The Yugoslav government's note of November 12, 1949)

It was not the case that "certain leaders in the Soviet Union" gave the Albanian government "orders" to follow the Cominform resolution. The Cominform resolution made it possible for the Albanian government to free itself from colonization.

"Stalin crushed Hitler and made it possible for us to free ourselves from the German occupiers, and Stalin unmasked the Serbian chauvinists in Belgrade and made it possible for us to free ourselves from their domination," said an Albanian Communist.

But what had happened, then, since Tito had sent teachers to Albania on instructions from the Comintern? And what had happened to the Balkan Federation? And what had Xoxe really done?

In the autumn of 1968, we were in the mountain village of Dardha, south of Korca. We discussed agriculture and the work of the cooperative. Six hundred people were working in the agricultural cooperative; it comprised five villages with a total of thirteen hundred inhabitants. The administration had been simplified.

"Today only eleven people are occupied with administrative work. But none of them works full time on administration. The chairman gives one hundred and fifty working days a year to administrative work; the ten others, one hundred working days a year. We don't really want any full-time administrators in our country. We are trying out new paths. By working in production during the greater part of the year, administrators find it easier to solve their administrative problems.

"They don't turn into officials.

"Or bureaucrats."

Much had been achieved—for instance, every village had a crèche—but much remained to be done.

"Bread has been a difficult political question. Each family used to bake bread for its own use. Imagine that. Hundreds and hundreds of ovens being heated every day. For the women it was hard work. It was a serious political problem. On the one hand, it wasted labor, and it reinforced the old individualistic attitude; on the other, many people thought collective bread wouldn't be as good as their own bread. We had to work at it a long time. But in the end we managed to produce a bread everyone thought was good. Those who were the best bakers in the village baked it. Now we have collective bread and now the women have more time for socialized work. It has liberated them."

"But the plum brandy isn't collective."

"We haven't managed that yet. Each family distills about a hundred liters a year. After all, everyone has plum trees. This has been a Christian village, so here people have always drunk brandy. We are discussing the brandy question. But most people still want to distill their own. And there can be no question of prohibitions and regulations for the people. Collectivization must be voluntary. But we're discussing the question and working politically, and gradually we'll solve it."

In the evening we sat with some old partisans and people who'd been active in the 1930s. They sang. They had singing competitions and sang against each other. And they sang songs about Dimitrov.

In 1969, we were with the young people who were building a railway outside Elbasani. An older man was working with them.

"Oh well, I'm not exactly young. But I think it's nice with young people. And then—I'm not exactly an Albanian. I'm a Macedonian, I worked in the Macedonian movement. But you know how things are on the other side of the frontier, and I've ended up here."

Balkan fellowship exists. The Albanians don't forget Dimitrov. Nor do they pursue a chauvinist policy in their own country. Sweden has a Finnish-speaking minority on its Finnish frontier. Albania has a Greek-speaking minority on

its frontier with Greece. The Swedish-speaking minority in Finland is treated in the best possible way by the Finnish authorities. The Greek government has obstinately maintained that it is at war with Albania (since Mussolini's attack on Greece in 1940, when Albania was occupied by the Italian fascists).

Sweden is said to be a progressive country, a shining light in world politics. At regular intervals, Sweden speaks in the UN on behalf of the oppressed nations. Sweden is also a highly developed country that can afford to expend vast sums of money on its school system. Albania is a country that is developing from poverty but that invests great parts of its resources on its schools.

All scientific experience shows that children have the best chance to develop if they learn to read in their own tongue. After which the national language of the country is learned as a second language.

Sweden does not permit its Finnish-speaking minority to begin school in the Finnish language. Sweden explains that the Finnish language is a small and unnecessary language and that it would be expensive to base education in Törneden, in Lapland, on Finnish. In Sweden's view, the Swedish language suffices (except that Finnish is a voluntary subject in the upper grades). Sweden thinks that Finnish-speakers really want to forget their own language as quickly as possible, and Sweden has tried to help them by forgetting their language for several generations. In the state-owned LKAB mining company's houses, it is forbidden to erect antennas to pick up Finnish TV; the company's officials take down all such antennas, and if the Finnish-speaking occupants persist in putting them up they can be punished.

But in Albania—which has so many great problems to struggle with—the Greek minority learns Greek as its first language in the schools. The minority has the right to retain its own language. Those who have Greek as their native tongue are not discriminated against.

This is the difference between a capitalist and bourgeois-chauvinist policy, and a socialist and nonchauvinist policy, on

the question of language. (And tenants in state-owned houses in Albania are allowed to put up TV aerials directed toward Italy.)

On the eve of the dissolution of the Turkish empire and of the Balkan Wars, a Balkan Confederation was regarded as the solution to the national problem. It would have been a good solution, and it foreshadowed Lenin's solution to the nationality question in revolutionary Russia. But it was not realized; it became an exhortation. In any case, it was not the working class in the Balkans who led the formation of nations; it was the chauvinist bourgeoisies and the court cliques.

The Balkan Federation remained the Communist movement's solution to the nationality question in the Balkans during the 1920s. But the Balkan states developed, and the situation changed. The question itself changed. During the war of liberation against the fascists, the main task was not the Balkan Federation but national liberation. This national liberation was not to be carried out *against* the other Balkan peoples. Within the Albanian liberation army, an obstinate campaign was fought against attempts by reactionaries and German fascists to exploit the old democratic demand for an "ethnic Albania."

In Sweden the discussion about a Balkan Federation usually ends with someone saying, "Stalin was against it. He bawled Dimitrov out for suggesting it."

This is both true and false. True that Dimitrov raised the question. Answering an interviewer's query about a Balkan Federation, he said, among other things:

When the question has ripened—which it will undoubtedly do one day—it will be solved by our peoples, by the peoples' democracies of Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Greece—note well, also Greece.

On January 29, 1948, *Pravda* wrote:

Many readers in the Soviet Union have turned to *Pravda* and asked questions which can be summed up like this: can we draw the conclusion that *Pravda*, by publishing Dimitrov's statement,

agrees with him as to the advisability of setting up a federation of Balkan and Danube states which would also comprise Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Greece? . . . *Pravda* is of the view that these countries do not need any dubious and artificial federation or confederation or customs union; what they need is the confirmation of their independence and autonomy, and its defense by means of the mobilization of their people's democratic forces within those countries.

Of more dubious value as a source is the highly dramatic account of what Stalin is alleged to have said to Dimitrov, as reported by Djilas and Dedijer:

We understand that Comrade Dimitrov lets himself go at press conferences, he lets his tongue wag. . . . You wanted to show off with fine words . . . you're an old political worker and you've been in politics for fifty years . . . you've behaved like a young club member . . . you wanted to astound the world as if you were still the secretary-general of the Comintern. . . .

Whatever Stalin's conversation was, the fact remains that Dimitrov's statement was unadvisable and politically unwise. He spoke as he spoke at the Belgrade meeting of 1909.

Poland had just gone through what could most accurately be called a civil war. In Czechoslovakia, the situation was extremely tense. In both countries Dimitrov's words came to be used by the reaction to clothe its propaganda against socialism in "national" guise. In Greece the people were fighting; it was out-and-out civil war. Dimitrov said what Truman had been longing for someone to say. And, like Stalin, politicians all over Europe were able to read in their morning papers about a project that concerned all states from Poland to Greece.

On December 24, 1947, the Greek Provisional Democratic Government was formed. There was fierce fighting against the United States and Great Britain and their puppet government in Athens. On December 29, the United Nations Balkans Commission issued a resolution saying that any recognition of this provisional government—even if only *de facto*—would constitute a grave threat to world peace. On January 7, 1948, Great Britain informed the Bulgarian gov-

ernment that any recognition of the provisional government would have the "gravest consequences."

And it was then—in this particular situation—that Dimitrov started thinking aloud and saying, "and Greece—note well, also Greece."

And when Stalin told him he hadn't behaved like an experienced politician, but like a young club member, this was certainly no exaggeration.

But this was not the end of the Balkan Federation. The end came in March 1948 when the Yugoslavs informed Bulgaria that they did not intend to agree to the creation of a united Macedonia, which was the Federation's prime condition. On March 28 Yugoslavia opened a campaign against Bulgaria, which it accused of oppressing the Macedonian people in Bulgaria.

And here is the crux of the matter! Since 1909 there had been two political lines on the nationality question in the Balkans. One of these was the one Dimitrov had been working for at the Belgrade Conference in 1909—the socialist one. It implied the Balkan people's national independence within a Balkan federation. The peoples with whom it was first and foremost concerned were the Macedonians and the Albanians. These two peoples' independence had always been severely threatened. Albania had only survived with immense difficulty; Macedonia had never become independent at all. So—the national independence of the peoples, including the Macedonians and the Albanians, within the framework of a democratic federation.

The other line was represented by the bourgeois chauvinists. For the Bulgarian chauvinists "Greater Bulgaria" also included Macedonia; for the Serbian chauvinists, it implied a "Greater Serbia," which would include Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Albania, a realm with "coasts on three seas, the Adriatic, the Aegean, and the Black Sea, and [which] would stretch from the Alps to Constantinople, a great power, the united Balkans" as Stefan Szende wrote in 1938.

These two political lines were mutually exclusive. But now Yugoslavia had begun to follow the Greater Serbian line; the

demands made by the Yugoslav leadership were no longer in accordance with the 1909 Balkan Conference, but stemmed from Greater Serbian ideas in the Yugoslavia of the period between the wars.

In 1942, Tito had been a Comintern worker, a Communist in a confidential position. Despite difficult communications, his actions were coordinated with the Comintern's general line. In 1943 the Comintern was dissolved. Its form of organization no longer corresponded to the demands that had been placed on it; Communists were leading armies of millions of men on two continents, as well as national liberation movements in many countries. Comrade Tito became the most respected Communist leader in the Balkans. His actions were no longer coordinated with those of a world party. The Albanian Communists admired him. They went on following his advice.

On the national question, the Albanian Liberation Army combated all chauvinist deviations. "Ethnic Albania" was a myth of reactionary propaganda. The Albanian people were to achieve national unity in fraternal cooperation with the other Balkan peoples.

The Albanian party's attitude to foreign intervention was in accordance with the Albanian people's historical experience. In the Central Committee's directive of November 3, 1943, concerning the Allied missions in Albania, we read:

... [they] must not mix themselves up in our affairs, are in no way to be seen as mediators between ourselves and the reactionaries. And if our war against the reaction is to their taste, so much the better; if it is not, the door is wide open for them to leave.

But the Yugoslav comrades had come to Albania as comrades in the same world party. Such people as Miladin Popović were close friends and good comrades with the Albanian Communists. Their memory is acclaimed in Albania even today. (Miladin Popović died in March 1945 after having been recalled from Albania. The Albanians maintain Rankovic had him killed.)

After the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, the Yugoslav comrades stayed on as representatives of a fraternal party and a fraternal liberation movement. The Albanian Communists had a deep respect for their Yugoslav comrades. In the summer of 1943 Tito sent Vukmanovich-Tempo to Albania. (In 1948 Vukmanovich-Tempo was to lead the campaign against Bulgaria.) He proposed the establishment of a "Balkan staff" which would be subordinate to Tito. This proposal was simultaneously presented to the Bulgarian Communists. The Albanian Central Committee turned it down. It could not see in what way this would contribute to the work of liberation. But Vukmanovich-Tempo won Koci Xoxe over to his point of view.

In the autumn of that year Vukmanovich-Tempo sent letters to the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party. Albanian partisans were operating on both sides of the northern frontier. Albanians were also living on both sides of it. Vukmanovich-Tempo demanded that this should cease: "Otherwise there will be no fighting, in which Communists, too, will participate."

The Communist Party of Albania replied that it had never accepted the idea of a "Greater Albania." The correct solution to the problem of the Albanian population in Kossova was for it to decide its own fate after the popular revolution had been triumphant in both Albania and in Yugoslavia.

In November 1944, Velimir Stoinic arrived in Albania. He immediately attacked what Miladin Popović had done. It was, he said, an incorrect line. He tried to get Enver Hoxha deposed, and proposed that representatives of the Church and the big bourgeoisie be included in the leading organs of the National Liberation Front. In this he was supported by Koci Xoxe, and Stoinic told the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party:

Albania cannot build up and develop its economy independently. Albania is just a tasty morsel for the imperialists. There is no other way out for Albania than to be united with Yugoslavia in a federation or in some closer way.

He demanded that the Albanian people be ideologically prepared for Albania's federation with Yugoslavia, and that Tito should become known as "the symbol of the Balkan peoples' and the European peoples' liberation."

Here Velimir Stoinic did not succeed, but he acquired influence on the Central Committee and pushed through some of his demands.

After the victory and during the early postwar period, Koci Xoxe was responsible for party organization. He was in control of the party apparatus and was cooperating with the Yugoslavs. He managed to create a situation in which all arrangements and decisions had to pass through his hands and be initialed by him. In the Central Committee he was opposed by Enver Hoxha.

"It was a difficult time," an old Communist told me. "We didn't know what to believe. We respected Tito. We believed in him. But at the same time there were such a lot of things that didn't seem to fit. No elections were ever held in the party. It was as if the ministry of the interior was in control of the party and not the party of the ministry of the interior."

The Yugoslav representatives became steadily more powerful. Many people were worried. Their behavior was unprincipled. They even arrogated to themselves the right of deciding purely party matters.

Within the Central Committee and the government, Enver Hoxha took a stand on the question of Albania's monetary parity with Yugoslavia. Albania's economy being as it was, this was impracticable. But an agreement had been signed and the Yugoslav leaders paid no attention to the protests of the Albanian Central Committee and government. The Yugoslav government demanded that the joint economic planning commission be given plenipotentiary powers. The Albanian Central Committee refused. In its view this would be the end of their own government's sovereignty.

Step by step the Yugoslav government was taking over the Albanian economy. It was also planning to take over the Albanian armed forces. It particularly wanted to depose

Mehmet Shehu, then Albanian chief-of-staff. But the Albanian Central Committee put up a fight.

In June 1947, Tito wrote a letter in which he accused the Albanian party leadership of "anti-Yugoslavism." Koci Xoxe used this letter in the struggle within the Central Committee. Yugoslavia demanded that Albania coordinate all its plans with the Yugoslav economic plan.

The Albanians' attempts to make contact with fraternal parties and with the Soviet Union were opposed by Yugoslav leaders. When an Albanian government delegation, led by Enver Hoxha, visited Moscow to consult with the Soviet government, and the Soviet government gave Albania credits for economic development, the Yugoslav representative in Moscow demanded that the Albanians make copies of all decisions made between the Soviet government and the Albanian government, maintaining that the Albanians had no right to sign anything without first having obtained Yugoslav approval. The Albanian government protested in Belgrade.

The result of the Moscow visit was that Tito intervened in person. In November 1947 he accused the Albanians of accepting help from the Soviet Union. This was a sign of "anti-Yugoslavism." Tito also made a direct attack on Nako Spiru, calling him an agent. Koci Xoxe took up this question and forced it to the point where Nako Spiru had a breakdown and committed suicide. (According to unanimous evidence, he never was an agent.)

In December 1947 an Albanian government delegation went to Sophia to strengthen ties between the two countries. Koci Xoxe was a member of that delegation. He demanded that every agreement be submitted to Tito before it could be signed. But he did not get his way. When the Communist and Worker Parties' Information Bureau was formed in October 1947, the Albanian Central Committee expressed their joy at this development and decided to coordinate their own actions with those of other Communist parties, and also to ask to become a member. In cooperation with the Yugoslav leaders, Koci Xoxe now prepared the Central Committee's Eighth plenum. With the aid of Yugoslav specialists and

ministry of the interior personnel, he fabricated accusations against the leading members of the party so that they would not be able to participate in the Central Committee plenum.

On December 5, 1947, on the eve of this plenum, the Yugoslav representative presented a plan for a federation between Albania and Yugoslavia. This proposal was supported by Koci Xoxe. The party's organizing secretary, the Albanian minister of the interior, and the Yugoslav representatives were now working together to force this proposal through the Central Committee plenum that was scheduled for February 1948.

They were victorious. Mehmet Shehu was expelled for "anti-Yugoslavism." Tito's November 1947 accusations were upheld. Albania was to be united to Yugoslavia. Koci Xoxe worked on this all through the spring. Matters of security were no longer under party control. The commission for the coordination of economic planning became a second government. Koci Xoxe demanded that Soviet advisors leave the armed forces. A unified military command was to be set up. Tito was to be joint commander-in-chief. The union was to be realized.

Clashes within the politbureau had been intense. Enver Hoxha opposed Koci Xoxe's line. He managed to get the various proposals made by the Yugoslavs and Koci Xoxe turned down.

The Yugoslavs demanded the right to send a couple of divisions into Albania in order to protect Albanian independence. Rankovic made these plans public. The Yugoslavs were convinced they would succeed.

Enver Hoxha then presented the Yugoslav plans to the Central Committee. He got a resolution passed that Albania would refuse to admit the Yugoslav divisions. Then he informed Stalin of the Yugoslav proposals and the way in which they had been turned down.

Next, Albanian Communists received copies of the correspondence between the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav Communist parties.

In the afternoon of June 28, 1948, a communiqué from a

meeting that had been held by the Communist and Workers' Parties Information Bureau in Romania was published. The resolution attached to it noted that the situation in the Yugoslav Communist Party had been discussed, and that

the following conclusion had been unanimously reached: The Information Bureau finds that the leaders of the Yugoslav Communist Party's Central Committee have placed themselves and the Yugoslav party outside the family of brotherly Communist parties, outside the united Communist front, and consequently outside the ranks of the Information Bureau. . . .

The Information Bureau's resolution was of decisive importance for Albania. The Albanian party was able to free itself from the Yugoslav stranglehold.

For the Albanian party, it was also a profound lesson. They had been able to see how people who a short while before had been good comrades had slipped inch by inch over to the enemy, how they had abandoned attitudes based on principles and had degenerated to bourgeois chauvinism. Out of the Balkan Federation a "Greater Yugoslavia" had very nearly arisen, with coasts on three seas, a great power stretching from the Alps to Constantinople that would have been governed from Belgrade by Rankovic.

For the Albanian people and the Albanian Communists the discussion of "Titoism" was never an abstract discussion. Once again Albania had almost seen itself lose its newly achieved national freedom.

From all this, Enver Hoxha and the Albanian Communists drew conclusions concerning the work now to be done. The party must not be undermined. Party democracy must not be compromised. Never again must a situation be allowed to arise where the ministry of the interior exercised sole power over the country. The Yugoslav leaders had not succeeded. And if they had not, it was because, despite all their efforts, they had not been able to undermine the Albanian party.

Koci Xoxe was brought before a court and condemned—not for what he had thought, for his opinions, or for what one person or another person had thought about him, or

because he had voted this way or that in the Central Committee. He was condemned for his actions. He had exploited his position and broken the laws and betrayed the revolution. He had followed in Esad Pascha Toptani's footsteps.

But when the Yugoslav people were threatened with an invasion led by the Soviet militarists in the autumn of 1969, the Albanian leaders declared that they were convinced that the Yugoslav people would defend themselves with their own weapons.

The Albanian minority in Yugoslavia is still in a difficult predicament. Kossova is the poorest and most backward part of Yugoslavia. In Albania everyone is convinced that this problem will one day be solved. Not with an "ethnic Greater Albania," but with the Albanian population on the other side of the frontier being freely allowed to determine their own destiny.

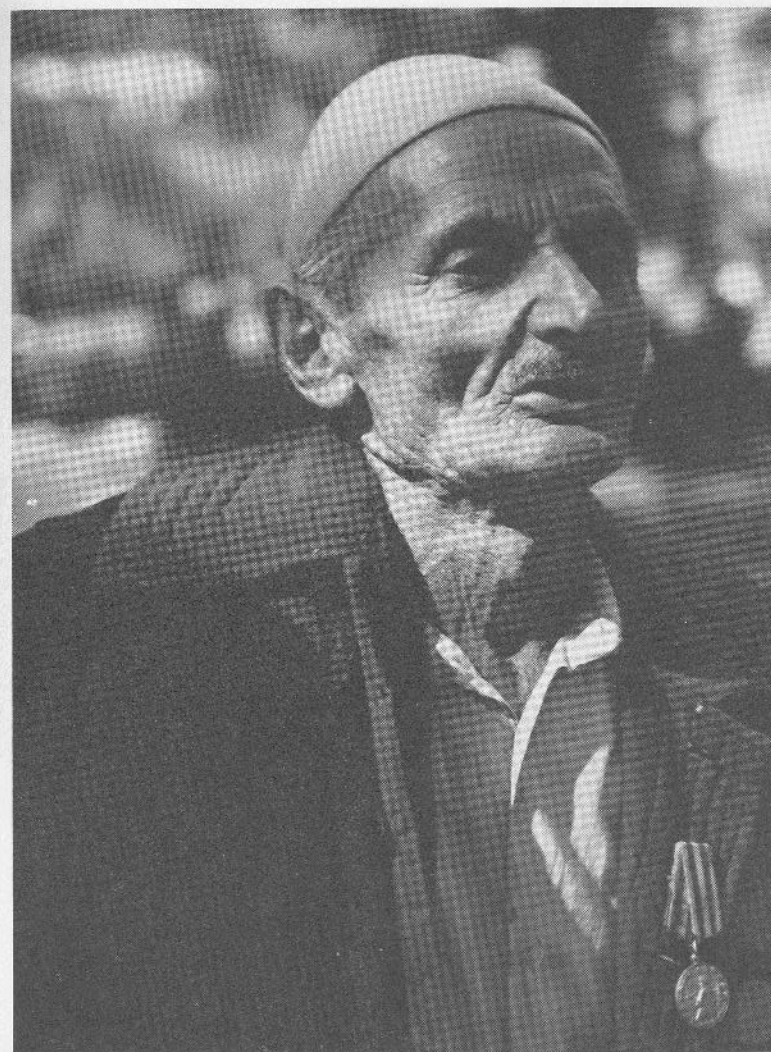


On September 8, 1968, the old partisans gathered at Rec to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of their victory at the battle of Rec in August-September 1943. People came from all over the region. They came walking down from the mountains above Shkodra. The main speaker was Koco Theodosi, minister of industry and a deputy member of the politbureau. Soviet troops had just occupied Czechoslovakia. Theodosi reported to the people on the measures the government had



taken to strengthen their defenses against any attempt by the Soviet generals to attack Albania and Yugoslavia. Nor would the Yugoslavs let themselves be occupied. The Albanians would support the Yugoslav people in any war of defense.

But the meeting at Rec was not only a political gathering; it was also a popular feast. People sat at long tables—the minister sat with everyone else, and he did not have any bodyguard—drank beer, and talked, and

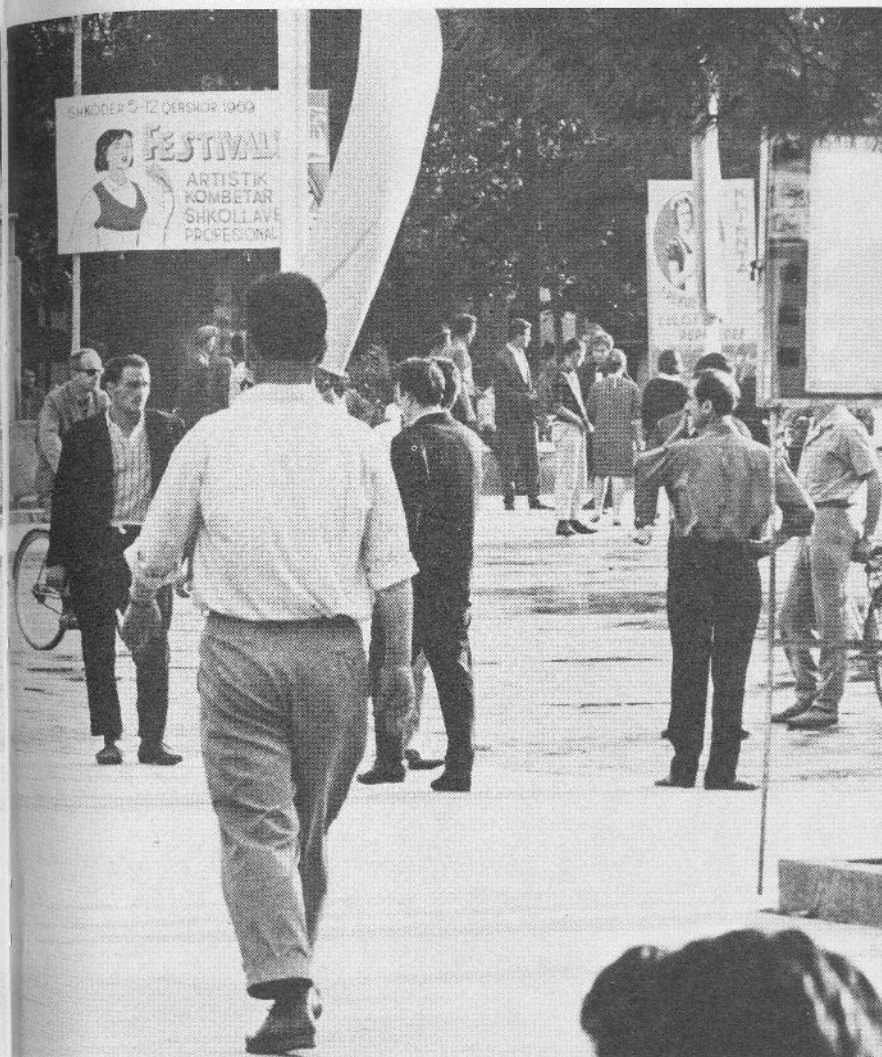


the old partisans offered home-distilled brandy. There is no clash between these two elements, political seriousness and public feasting. An old partisan—a veteran of the struggle against the Italians in 1920 and the struggle against the Italians and Germans during the world war—moved over on the bench when we arrived and said, “There’s always room for another guest if he’s welcome.” He offered us brandy. A moment later he said, “Today I’m a worker on an agricultural collec-



tive. We're making progress. It's as comrade Enver says: with a hoe in one hand, a rifle in the other, we're building up our country."

Albania was the only country in Europe that liberated its own territory entirely with its own forces. No foreign troops liberated any part of Albania. This was possible thanks to the victory of the Soviet Union; Stalin crushed Hitler, and so enabled the Albanians to liberate themselves. But it is important to remember that Albania was not liberated



by foreign troops; this was to be decisive for its development. When the war ended in victory and the last German troops were driven out on November 29, 1944, Enver Hoxha was minister-president in the provisional government and the national liberation army consisted of seventy thousand men. In 1943 there were 709 members of the Albanian Communist Party. The people had weapons. Stalin had liberated Albania by crushing Hitler—but his troops never stood on Albanian soil.



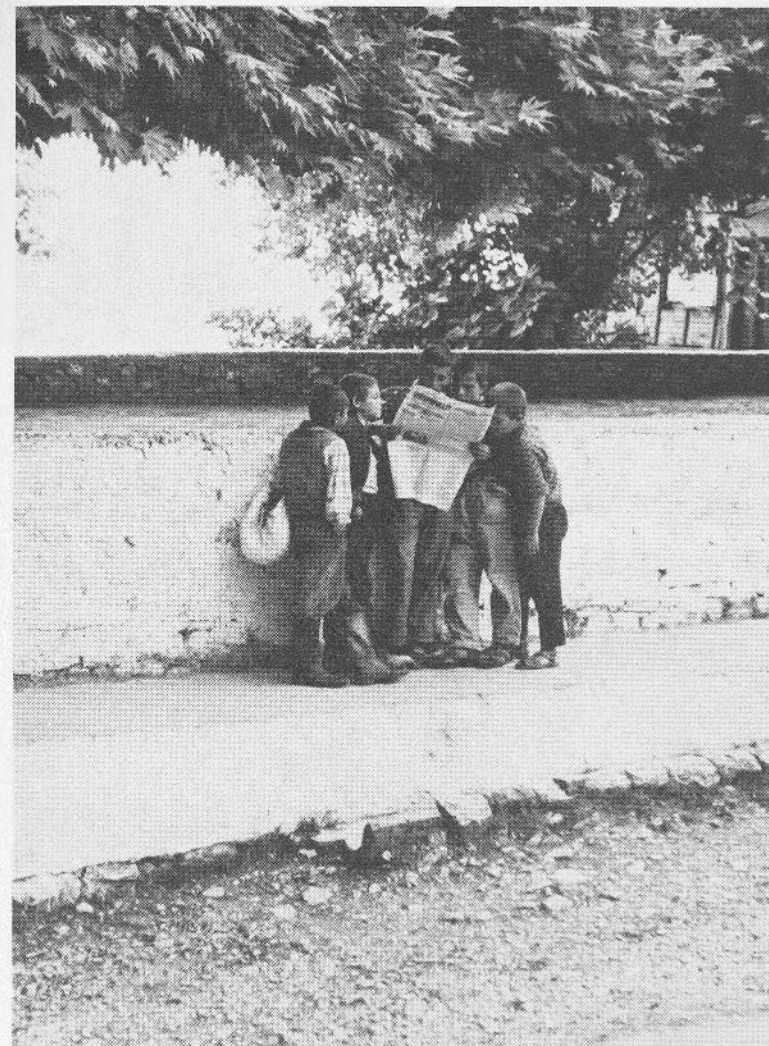
Before the war there had been no parties in Albania. The Communist Party was formed in 1941 with the aid of the Comintern; it became the first—and only—party in the country. Unlike the situation in the other liberated countries, the old state apparatus was totally crushed by the liberation army. On October 1, 1943, the party set itself this task: "The first question which must be taken up is the power of the state . . . the establishment of national liberation councils everywhere. . . . There

must be no ambiguity—no other power but the national liberation councils will be allowed to exist." National liberation became simultaneously social revolution. When the state of the feudal lords, of the foreign yes-men and the bourgeoisie, was smashed to pieces, power passed into the hands of the people.

Today, while socialism is being built up, the revolution continues. An important instrument is the *flete-rufe*—"lightning sheets." Anyone



has the right to write critically about—and name—authorities and officials in the state, the party, and in other organizations. Those who are criticized have no right to remove the criticisms from the notice board, and it is a penal offense to act in any way against the critic. The persons criticized are under an obligation to put up a notice with their explanation within three days. These *flete-rufe* are found in all the towns, at all places of work, in schools, and in apartment blocks. At first many



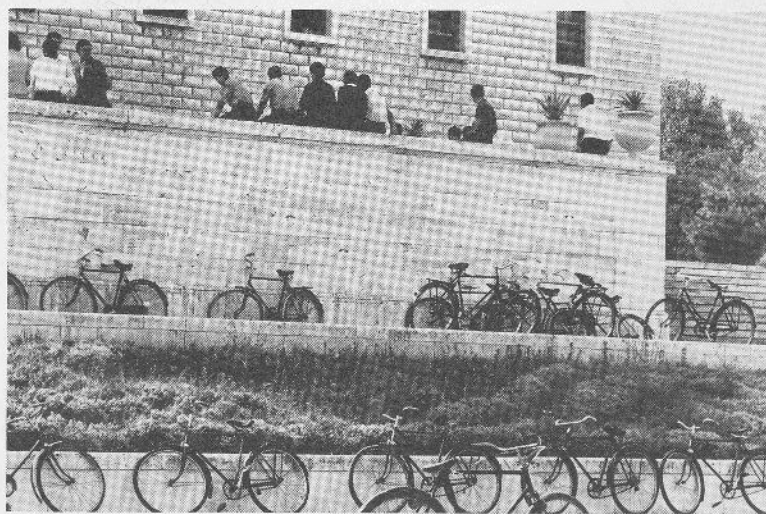
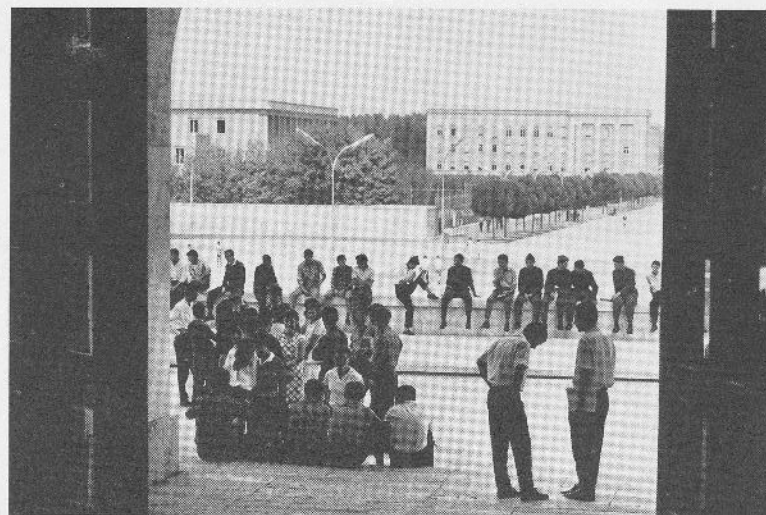
people were reluctant to criticize "powerful persons" publicly. It was against all tradition. But today the importance of such criticism is growing.

Before the war 80 percent of the population was illiterate. In March 1953 the party decided to "organize courses against illiteracy . . . to enable our peasants to enjoy the fruits of culture which the earlier reactionary regimes have withheld from them." Free schooling was



made available to all children. At the same time, legislation was passed making adult education obligatory for all illiterates under the age of forty. These courses were attended by 345,000 adults, and in 1955 illiteracy had been eradicated except among those who had been older than the age of forty.

More crèches are being built, and eight obligatory years of schooling have been introduced, even in the countryside. The university at Tirana



is being expanded. In its school system, Albania has taken the leap from being a backward country whose schools were in the hands of foreign monks and foreign teachers—who taught the children more about France's history than Albania's, more about Italian literature than Albanian, in schools that were expressions of foreign domination — into a country whose own institutions are training scientists and technicians.



In 1968 the structure of the schools was being discussed. This discussion was not carried on among "experts"; it was carried on by the whole people. They discussed marking and the syllabus, and opinions diverged. Only after this were new school reforms introduced.

Young people are building roads and railways, breaking new ground in the mountains, constructing terraces for olive groves. This is not a question of "labor." It cost 35 percent more to build the Rrogozhina-Fieri railway with youth brigades than in the normal manner. It would

have been cheaper to let the youngsters do something else and import the necessary machinery instead. But this railway, the young Albanians' own railway, has a goal other than "profitability."

In these enterprises young people from the towns and villages live and work together. Not only do students, young farmers, and young workers get to know one another; they learn to work together until they become one. Road building forms part of their education. Young people learn that nature can be transformed by work. They are obliged



to solve difficult working tasks—under the supervision of trained engineers. At the fourth section of the Elbasani-Pishkashi railway project 4,500 youngsters were at work. After a month they were relieved by others. They were under the leadership of 560 professional railroad workers and engineers. Of the first months' youngsters, 60 had stayed on to train as specialists. School pupils were estimated to be capable of about 60 percent of normal output; students, workers, and agricultural youths, 70 percent.



The work is political. In the north, patriarchal custom is deep rooted. It was there that the status of women was worst. There in the camps youngsters from north and south mingle. Girls from the mountain villages live with town girls from the south. In this way they educate each other, and the girls from the north become more self-assured and independent.

At first the reactionary elements, former priests and others, spread rumors about immorality in the camps. So parental visits to the camps



were arranged. The parents were brought in buses from the mountain villages of the north.

A young midwife at Borshi told us: "Today all children in this district are born in a hospital. It's better this way. We've built it ourselves, but the state pays all the costs. The patients? The patients don't pay anything. Surely one shouldn't have to pay for being ill or giving birth to a child? It would be absurd for the patients to pay anything."

THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

Albania has grown. The difficulties were many. The country was poor. There was a lack of skilled labor. Help from the Soviet Union was important. But it took a long while to arrive and, as Enver Hoxha pointed out in 1969, "Even so, it was limited because of the difficult situation that had been created in the Soviet Union as a result of monstrous losses during the war."

Albania had to build itself up on its own. The country was isolated from its allies. But progress was made. Then, eight years after Albania had liberated itself from Yugoslav dominance, a new crossroads was reached. Stalin had died. New leaders had come into power in the Soviet Union. A circular from Khrushchev reached the Central Committee of the Albanian Labor Party (the name of the Communist Party in Albania). Khrushchev wanted the Cominform resolution of November 1949 annulled. The circular had a resolution appended. It was to be published in the name of the Cominform.

The Central Committee discussed the question with great seriousness. It was important on two levels, partly because of its attitude toward the Yugoslav leaders, but above all because of relations between Communist parties. On May 25, 1955, the Central Committee wrote to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It pointed out that it regarded Khrushchev's attitude toward the Yugoslav leaders as incorrect. The question could not be solved by circulars. What was needed was a proper political discussion, with reasons for and against. Only after such a discussion could a resolution be issued. The resolution could not be made in advance. The Albanian Labor Party assumed that the Information Bureau

would be summoned to a meeting and would be able to discuss the question before anything was published.

But Khrushchev did not bother with these objections. He went to Belgrade and in his own name committed all Communist parties to a new policy.

This was not merely a policy vis-à-vis the Yugoslav leaders. It was a new policy in all future areas. And Khrushchev continued with this personal policy. All Communists all over the world were to do what the leaders in the Kremlin told them to. There would be no political discussion. In a letter issued by the Central Committee on May 25, 1955, Albania took up the struggle against revisionism.

The situation was repeated at the Romanian party congress in June 1960. On June 21 Khrushchev made a frontal attack on the Chinese party. He demanded immediate agreement from all delegations. But then the Albanian representative got to his feet. He said that no one had been informed of this attack. No one had any mandate to discuss such a question. If the Soviet Union wanted to discuss these questions, then each party's Central Committee must be given a chance to study the Soviet materials, to hear the Chinese answer, and only then make its decision. Not before. In this way, Khrushchev's attempts to get China "expelled" failed. There had been no preliminary contact between China and Albania.

At a Moscow meeting in 1960 Enver Hoxha attacked Khrushchev's policy. He explained how damaging it was to Albania. He described Khrushchev's attempt at blackmail. But the Albanian delegates in Moscow were far from home. They had the support of their own party and their people, but in order to be sure they were acting correctly they gathered all the Albanian students in Moscow every evening. Enver Hoxha reported in detail on the meetings, after which these questions were also discussed by the students. In this way the Albanian representatives, even while they were in Moscow, were able to keep in touch with their own people and their members. For the students were all party members.

The breach with the leaders of the Soviet Union was not a breach with the Soviet Union itself. The Albanian party drew

a clear distinction between the Soviet leaders and the great socialist revolution.

The breach was over basic issues. And the Albanian government, the Albanian party, and Enver Hoxha had the people's complete support for their actions. Khrushchev did not succeed in gaining more than a few small groups within the party.

One might ask how it could happen that, of all the socialist countries in Europe, it should be Albania that refused to follow Khrushchev.

There were a number of reasons. The Albanian people's struggle for independence had been unusually long and bitter. But this bitter struggle had also yielded important experiences. In a hard struggle the Albanian people had had to ask themselves questions which, in many parties, had never been asked, much less answered.

The question of a united front of all working people under the leadership of a proletarian party as the condition of victory had been asked and answered between 1920 and 1941.

National independence and international solidarity were not abstract questions to a people who had achieved national independence through such terrible sacrifices.

The belief that the imperialist powers would suddenly change their nature and that the "peace question" was not a class question could not be adopted by a people who had experienced what the Albanian people had.

But these experiences had also led to the party's raising the question of power during the war in a correct manner. The old state apparatus had been crushed. The people had not succumbed to the temptations of Great Britain; they had liberated themselves and opposed intervention by any foreign power. In this way they had avoided following the path that had been traveled by the French and Italian Communists.

To Albania, the Soviet Union and Stalin had been a support and a bulwark. It had been the Soviet Union's troops that had crushed the Hitlerian war machine. It had been Stalin who had helped the Albanians politically when the Yugoslav leaders were on the point of taking the country

over. But Albania had not been occupied by Soviet forces. Actions that came to have such serious consequences in so many eastern European countries did not affect developments in Albania.

Experiences of how, within the course of a few years, the Yugoslav comrades had degenerated from Communists into Greater Serbian chauvinists had raised the question of revisionism for the entire Albanian people, in a highly concrete manner.

Nor had there been time for a social stratum to develop that could provide the social base for developments corresponding to those in the Soviet Union.

PROBLEMS AND DEVELOPMENTS

But this attitude toward revisionism, toward the entire development that today characterizes the Soviet Union and that shows itself in all fields from art policy to the occupation of neighboring countries and collaboration with United States imperialism, was not, after all, an attitude against something. It did not merely mean being "orthodox."

A difficult time followed the breach with the Soviet leaders. Albania was economically blockaded. It had opponents in every field. It received help from China—but China was far away. And the Soviet propagandists managed rather successfully to depict Albania as a nasty little bloodthirsty country, impossible in every way.

All this I remember very well. Though I had Albanian friends in the early 1950s while I was doing international youth work, I too—without being aware of it—had soaked up the Soviet propaganda. When discussing Albania with some Chinese friends in 1962, I often found it hard to understand them. I remember discussing Albania one evening in Kunming, in December 1962. Afterward Gun and I talked it over together. We took an evening walk through Kunming so we could discuss the question in peace and quiet without anyone else being present. We agreed that the Soviet Union had behaved crudely and that its policy was dangerous (that was just after Cuba); even so, in our view, the Chinese were taking too strong a line in their defense of Albania.

"You know," I said to Gun, "Hoxha had Xoxe shot, and Khrushchev must be right to some extent."

The first time we came to Albania we were not only ignorant, we were prejudiced. Our prejudices were based on a

whole series of inaccurate pieces of information, on cultural isolation, and on Soviet propaganda.

The country we experienced then, and the discussions we had, forced us to ask the question: "The Kremlin and the Vatican, the Pentagon, Athens, and Belgrade all condemn Albania. Suppose the Albanians are right?"

We traveled around the country. We heard, saw, discussed. Then we began to read. We came back. We left again. We sat in the National Library in Tirana (and they brought heaps of books to the table). We were wrong. It was the Albanians who were right.

This is not a private tale. This is a development we have in common with many like us. Left-wingers who have unconsciously swallowed the propaganda from the Soviet Union and the United States—all, really, because Albania is a small country. But who also, as the years have passed, have come to the conclusion that the Albanians were right. But it is not only the Albanians who are right. The Albanians—the Albanian Communists—have also been forced to face up to great and decisive questions. And they have come up with answers that are important to us.

In this book I have given little space to production statistics. Production statistics in themselves say little. (Even if it is important to know that in 1968 Albania was using 79 kilos of artificial fertilizer per hectare of cultivated soil, Greece 68 kilos, Yugoslavia 60.4 kilos, Hungary 66.9 kilos, Spain 36.8 kilos, and Italy 72.6 kilos.) What is more important is that Albania has developed very swiftly. Even more important is *how* it has developed, and what has been the goal of this development. In deciding to oppose Soviet revisionism, the Albanian Communists were obliged to discuss how it had come about that socialism could have developed in this way in the Soviet Union. What had happened? And how could it be avoided?

Khrushchev was talking about Stalin. Now he talked this way, now that. Stalin was described as a person who, all on his own, had distorted developments. The Albanians did not agree with this analysis. They even refused to accept it as an

analysis. As far as the cult of personalities was concerned, they held another view:

Stalin was an undemanding person. As a Marxist-Leninist, he made a correct assessment of the roles played by the masses and the individual; on more than one occasion he opposed the cult of personality and criticized it as alien to Marxist-Leninists. Even so—particularly during Stalin's last years—the cult was blown up all out of proportion. And this was used by the Khrushchev clique which, out of terror, had itself elevated Stalin in order to reach its own anti-Marxist and anti-Stalinist goal. Stalin can be criticized, not for developing and practicing a cult of himself, but only because he did not take the necessary measures to check this unnecessary propaganda. When, more particularly, one takes into account the great reputation which Stalin had won as a result of his struggle and his actions, [one sees that] the boundless confidence and love the party and the people felt for him would have been enough for him to deal a sensible blow against the bureaucratic elements that were threatening the dictatorship of the proletariat. (Enver Hoxha, 1966)

For what had happened in the Soviet Union was not that an individual had enforced a cult, but that a social basis for a revisionist policy had come into being:

Especially important to the preservation and strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the struggle which the party undertakes against bureaucratic distortions. It is well known that these were one of the main bases for the growth and development of revisionism in the Soviet Union. The struggle against bureaucracy aims to closely tie the regime to the people; to place it under the direct, efficient, and constant control of the great working masses; to develop and constantly deepen and improve socialist democracy in all its aspects. (Enver Hoxha, 1969)

Such a course of development is not without problems. Far from it. Old customs lie deep. At a meeting on May 14, 1969, the workers in the Pishkashi mines criticized the manager and the administration. Management had tried to avoid doing heavy work in the mines; they had tried to get themselves easy work during their days in production. A number of individuals in the administration had claimed that they

had too much to do to be able to work in the open-pit mine. Even so, they had not been attacked. They had been criticized as comrades.

"After all, they weren't enemies."

Now those who had made these errors in management had improved. They had seen the error of their ways. Now they were working as ancillary workers. The goal was that everyone in the administration should be trained to the point where he or she could do a proper job of work as a worker. Through an intimate knowledge of production each would also fulfill his or her administrative tasks in the right way.

"The manager can only function in the right way if he works regularly as a loader in the mine. Otherwise, he's working in a paper mine, not in an iron mine."

But it is not only a question of control and democracy. It is also a question, as Hoxha has pointed out, of clearing away the false *Weltanschauung* left behind by many centuries of private ownership. In this struggle the question of society's development and construction is posed in a new way. The Albanian Communists have settled accounts with technocracy:

In the revisionist countries technocracy, along with—and as an expression of—bureaucracy, has become an important means whereby the working class has been deposed from leadership and capitalism has been restored. The economy in these countries, which the revisionists persist in calling "socialist" on the pretext that they are nationalized or collectivized, is in reality only a capitalist economy of its own kind. It is operated by, serves, and works for the new bourgeois bureaucratic and technocratic class which is still developing there. (Enver Hoxha, 1966)

The capitalists and the modern revisionists are using such pretexts as "superindustrialization" and the creation of an "industrial society" and the "complete mechanization" of agriculture, and so forth in order to force the agricultural workers to abandon their agriculture and increase the power of the agrarian concerns. They are depopulating the countryside and throwing millions of unemployed onto the roads, thereby creating a reserve of wage-

slaves whom they can use to increase the exploitation in the towns.

In our society we are following a diametrically opposite course. We are laying greatest store by industrialization and mechanization. But at the same time we do not undervalue the countryside, and we are not entering a path which leads to the depopulation of the villages. We are developing agriculture harmoniously. . . . The preservation of correct proportions within this field is exceedingly important to the construction of socialism in our country. . . . If we permit deviations in this field, then there will be trouble, and the deviations will entail serious political, class, and ideological consequences. (Enver Hoxha, 1969)

This developmental model—which can be seen at work all over the country—is wholly unlike any being used by any other country. It is an expression of Albania's new line. The Albanians have analyzed what has happened in such countries as the Soviet Union, and on the basis of the Soviet experience they are trying to build socialism in a way that cannot lead to the growth of new privileged social strata that would distort developments and gradually turn the country into a somewhat less efficient version of the monopoly-capitalist countries.

CONCLUSIONS

The Albanian people have come a long way. They are also building a new type of society. Here too they have come far. Today's Albania is not to be compared with the Albania of 1938. This is a victory; it is also a danger.

Albania is a small country, surrounded by Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece. It is building socialism under the most troublesome conditions. Its enemies are hoping that it will fail. Such a failure can be envisaged.

The Albanian Communists are well aware of this. Their state can become bureaucratic, the people can lose control over it.

These measures [the revolutionizing of the People's Army—JM] are decisive in preventing our people's army, the armed strength of the state's security, from degenerating and being transformed into the blind tool of the counterrevolution, as has happened in the Soviet Union and other countries where it is being used to exert revisionist or social-fascist violence against a dissatisfied people, or is being exploited for Soviet-revisionist imperialism's plans of conquest. (Enver Hoxha, 1969)

To implement the workers' power in a state is not easy; it is not easy to ensure that the people will always have control:

All revisionists are always talking about "socialist democracy"; they are speculators in the word. This is a complete swindle and insolent demagoguery. Where the revisionists are in control there is not, and cannot be, any democracy for the working people. Modern revisionism in the Soviet Union and in the former socialist countries is itself based on the bureaucratization of national life; i.e., on the negation of democracy. See what has happened in the revisionist countries! Faced with the masses' increasing resis-

tance to revisionist policies, the "liberal" revisionist dictatorship is all the time using more overtly fascist violence. (Enver Hoxha, 1969)

Today Albania has 113 students for every 10,000 inhabitants. That is a lot. It is more than Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland have. It is in this youth that the enemies of Albania place their hopes. These new, highly educated youngsters—so it is hoped—will make up the social stratum which, in its struggle for privilege, will form a bureaucracy seeking power for itself, leading Albania down the same path the bureaucracy has followed in the Soviet Union.

This is possible. And because it is possible, the struggle in today's Albania concerns this young generation. Today it is not just a question of building up the country; it is a question of overcoming many thousands of years of class rule and oppression, which still determine thoughts and feelings.

What is so hopeful about Albania is that the Albanians can see clearly, and are openly discussing, all these possibilities of an evil development. For in this way they can be overcome and Albania can go further along the road of revolution.

SUMMING UP (TIRANA, DECEMBER 1974)

Five and a half years later we went back to Albania. It was the thirtieth anniversary of the liberation and the triumph of the People's Revolution of November 29, 1944.

Much had changed. The planned economic development has been rapid. Albania is becoming an industrial-agrarian country well on the road toward an industrial society of a new type. The economic base of socialism has been built; the last few years and the coming decade are to be the proof of the pudding. Socialism is possible.

Centralized planning democratically controlled by the working people makes the even development of the whole country possible. In Lukova we visited the same families we met in 1969. Life is better. But it is not better only because standards are improving and every family has a radio and houses have been rebuilt and decorated. Lukova has had its own dentist for a year. The streets of the village have been paved. More important, fifty families have moved back to Lukova. The rural areas are not being depopulated.

The reason is the tremendous terracing work that has been carried out. This investment is not profitable. That is to say, it would not be profitable in a capitalist economy. Look over the sea to Italy! Neither would it be possible without strong centralized planning. But the olive trees will give fruit for centuries to come. Nature has been changed and is producing food. This also means that society is planned in such a way that Lukova will be a populous and living community during the foreseeable future. Revolution is rational. Olives are a necessity. When the market no longer rules, the people are able to shape their own future with their own work. All over

the country the picture was the same as in Lukova. Life is better, social development is rapid. Village streets are being paved, new hospitals, new health centers, dentists, maternity homes, and schools. Now nearly 30 percent of the whole population is either attending school or participating in other educational programs. Albania is going through a great change.

So far the description sounds like one from the Soviet Union in the 1930s. A USSR in construction, but on a much smaller scale on the shores of the Adriatic. Economic development is rapid, the rate of accumulation is high. The fruits of the long years of careful planning, of a high rate of accumulation and giving priority to heavy industry are being reaped (in this case, the first phase includes the extraction of oil, iron ore, copper, chrome, etc.). The generation that is taking over the responsible positions in the party and in the state and in economic life is a generation brought up during these years of revolution and planned socialist construction.

Some of the old leaders from the national liberation war and the early years of socialist construction have died. Others are pensioners. Even though the Communists that Enver Hoxha led to victory were young people, they are getting on toward sixty.

Albania is a small country. It is not a continent like China. It is surrounded by countries with different social structures, and it is meeting the active hostility of the two superpowers and of the Vatican, an ideological power with long experience in the struggle against heretics and with nearly two thousand years of political interest in Albania. What can Albania's future be?

In Albania the people are conscious of these problems. Reality forced the discussion about revisionism on the Albanian people. A clarification was necessary for the survival of the revolution and of the nation itself when the Soviet leaders showed that they were prepared to use the Albanian party and the Albanian people as pawns in a superpower game.

The discussion is not a debate about fine points of theory.

Neither is it a discussion about "what the Russians are like." It is one that deeply concerns not only the Albanians or the neighbors of the new and hungry empire ruled from the Kremlin. It concerns every socialist and everyone who works and struggles for a better life for the working people of this world.

We can all see that the Soviet Union and the people's democracies of Eastern Europe do not fulfill the hopes once placed in them. They are very far from the goals that were set. Of course they have had economic development, but only a cynic could say that this development and this social structure are worth all the sacrifices and all the suffering.

Take Poland. The people have struggled and toiled and today they are told that the life they are living is one of socialism. But the workers are still being exploited and have to fight for their interests in a harsh class struggle against a new bourgeoisie. This new bourgeoisie is so corrupt that—according to a decision made by the Stockholm tax authorities—it is a tax-deductible expense for Swedish businessmen and Swedish corporations to bribe Polish state officials. No wonder many people in Poland have become cynical. And not only the Albanians, but workers in Sweden and other countries ask if this is what is meant by socialism. Bureaucracy, a new privileged and ruling class, continued exploitation of the working class, police and prostitutes and church and foreign capital?

It is not difficult to prove that this development is a bad one; the difficulty is to show what went wrong and how. In the Soviet Union the people struggled and toiled and suffered in achieving their revolution, building socialism, defending it, and reconstructing the country. At long last they were to reap the fruits of their labor—but when that time came, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they were cheated. What went wrong? Will Albania follow the same road now that the time has come for the people to begin to gather the harvest they have worked for these thirty years?

As a result of the discussions on modern revisionism and

the way in which the Soviet Union has changed, the problem is now very clearly stated in Albania:

Our party and state have never permitted and will never permit, on any occasion and under any circumstances, the creation of a privileged stratum, as has happened in the revisionist countries where it has become the basis of the counterrevolution. (Speech by Hysni Kapo at the solemn meeting on the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of the liberation of the homeland and the triumph of the people's revolution, Tirana, November 28, 1974)

These are not just words. The income gap between different groups in the country is being reduced in a planned fashion. The ratio between the highest and lowest income is now down to 1:3. This process is continuing. This also implies a gradually diminishing gap between rural and urban areas and between rich and poor rural areas. Through a planned economy, investments are directed in such a way that they have an equalizing effect on the country and stabilize the population structure.

This is a political struggle. It is of course true that the agricultural cooperatives in the valleys tend to have higher incomes than those in the mountains. By political work, the cooperative peasants have become convinced that the road to real development and the basis for socialist equality is that each should be paid according to his or her work and not according to the land worked on; thus the cooperatives in the valleys have joined the cooperatives in the mountains to form higher cooperatives. This is a necessary step. But it cannot be forced. It has to be carried out by the working peasants themselves, after discussion.

Heavy state investment in electrification, rural medical service, and a widespread network of schools are measures of the same type.

To carry through these, and other, policies the revolution needs a centralized leadership. The party is thus necessary. The party cadres have a responsible function. But, as Lenin pointed out and Enver Hoxha continuously repeats:

Socialism cannot be established by a minority, by the party. It is established by tens of millions of people when they learn to do this work for themselves. We see our merit in the fact that we are trying to help the masses to get down to this job themselves immediately, and this is something that cannot be learned from books or lectures.

The experience of the Soviet Union proves that the party can become the political organization of a new privileged group that tends to itself become a class and to change into a class for itself. If this happens in Albania, then the Albanian revolution is doomed to failure and Albania will degenerate into a new form of capitalism.

Worker control is necessary. The party does not stand above the people. The working class is in power; the party serves the working masses. It is not the party that is in power over the working class. Enver Hoxha has many times taken up this question of working-class control and of rendering accounts to the masses of people. He has done so concretely and bluntly:

But do we act on the instructions of Lenin? No, we do not act completely in this way! On the contrary, in order to save time we have created some forms of work, thinking that these help it along, and the work gets done. Thus, the general meeting of the cooperative, when it comes down to it, is a mere formality and we are satisfied that in its place we have the representative body and the meeting of the assembly. But we must not forget that the representative body could go astray or fall in line with the chairman's opinion; there could even be people appointed to it who curry favor and follow this or that party secretary; among them there could be some three or four persons who get on familiar terms with those in the leadership, etc. Therefore, it is better to render an account to all the masses of the cooperative members and teach them, as Lenin instructs us, to open their mouths. The correctness or incorrectness of the leadership is judged by the masses, and the leadership is responsible to the masses for what is done.

Existing forms leave room for those in positions of responsibility to feather their own nests, some even thinking they can get away with it while the district first secretary of the party

knows about it. This makes it essential that every Communist, whether responsible for supplies, a salesman, a worker of the municipal services, or whatever, should render an account of his work, say, once a month to the masses of the people. This creates the possibility for the masses to express their opinion on how they are being served, supplied, treated, what they think of this or that person, to judge those in positions of responsibility when they are at fault, and even to give their opinions on whether or not they should be kept on in their positions, and to dismiss them from them when they go on making mistakes and fail to correct themselves. ("Socialism Is Built by the Masses, the Party Makes Them Conscious," February 26, 1972)

The struggle against a possible privileged stratum is consciously carried through not only in the field of material standards (salaries and incomes) and in the field of politics ("the cadres are respected as long as they work and act in keeping with the line and directives of the party, the laws of the state, and the norms of socialist ethics," as Enver Hoxha said in his speech of November 3, 1974), but it is also a question of changing the very style of life.

That the students do manual work in order to get a clearer understanding of reality and a closer link with the working people and their own future role in society is one thing; but the same holds for all state and party functionaries and cadres. Ministers, ambassadors, heads of departments, professors; they all work at manual labor one month a year. In this way the Albanians try to see to it that there will not appear in Albania that new class that led the Soviet Union and the people's democracies of Eastern Europe to a new form of capitalism.

Enver Hoxha has tremendous prestige. He is one of the truly great figures in Albanian history. As a national hero of the Albanian people he takes his place next to Skanderbeg. Enver Hoxha led the war of national liberation and formulated the policies that kept the Albanian people independent. Enver Hoxha is the founder of the Albanian Labor Party (the Communist Party of Albania), and he has been the leader since its foundation. He is respected and he is one of the

great working-class leaders and Marxist-Leninists of our time.

It is natural that much popular feeling has concentrated on him. This too could have become a danger. Whether he wanted it or not, he could have been seen as standing above the party and above the people—a “hero,” a political demi-god. But as he said in his November 3 speech, “Glories and hymns should be sung to no one but the party and the people.”

Of course, he is one of the great figures in Albanian history and one of the outstanding Communists in the world today. For this he is respected and beloved. But he is not the subject of a cult of personality; he does not stand above or outside the people.

I looked at Enver Hoxha when Hysni Kapo spoke at the meeting to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary. It was the first such occasion that Enver Hoxha did not make the speech himself. When the public applauded his name and shouted “Enver Hoxha” he took the applause, calmed it, redirected it to the party. Enver Hoxha is not being played down in Albania; how could he be? But he is applauded not as a personality but as the founder and servant of the party.

This is a conscious policy as new generations are taking over. Albania is a hopeful country. It is developing beyond the stage at which the revisionist leaders of the Soviet Union and the East European people’s democracies changed the color of their countries. And it is proving that the development of revisionism and the rise of the new exploiting class is not a necessity.

The development of Albania is closely bound to that of revolutionary forces across the world. Albania is not alone. And one of the new developments of these last five or six years is the growing interest in the Albanian experience. Due to its principled struggle, the small Albanian people have become the focus of interest for militant trade union activists in the Swedish mining districts, Polish dockers fighting for socialism against their new bosses, students from Africa, leaders of the underground resistance against the fascist generals in Chile, and many others. And Tirana, which once

was a secluded Balkan city, is becoming a meeting place for discussing and exchanging experiences. Albania is a small country and the Albanian people are not numerous. But they are not alone.

Relations between Albania and its neighbors are good. There are no territorial disputes. The social systems are different, but Albania actively tries to ensure that the super-powers will not be able to use the Balkans for their intrigues. Enver Hoxha made this very clear in his speech of November 3, 1974:

We have already told, and we tell again, the Yugoslav and Greek peoples that Albania’s borders with them will always be quiet. The enemy will first have to face us Albanians and will be routed here and hardly be able to reach their borders. We believe that they will take the same stand toward us.

The face of Tirana is changing. But the color of Albania is not!